POEMS CHIEFLY NARRATIVE

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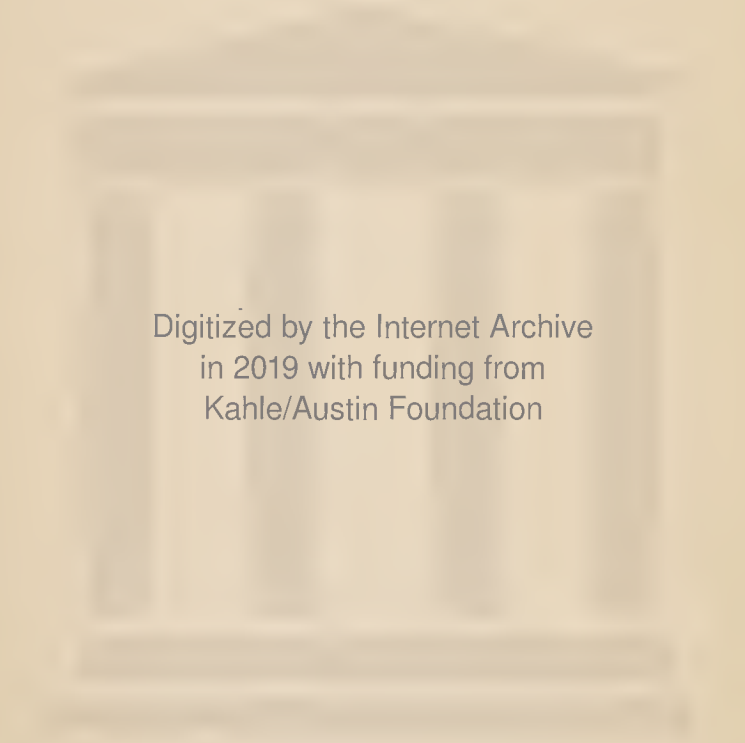

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POEMS, CHIEFLY NARRATIVE

EDITED BY

W. L. MACDONALD, M.A., PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

AND

F. C. WALKER, M.A., PH.D.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

TORONTO AND LONDON
J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD.

PR 1195.N2M3 1930

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
MESSRS. RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LTD.,
THE CHAUCER PRESS, BUNGAY, SUFFOLK

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1925, 1926,
1928, 1929, 1930

REVISED EDITION FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA 1930

PREFACE

"CÆDMON, sing me something."—"What shall I sing?"—"Sing for me the Story of Creation." These words, recorded by the Venerable Bede concerning the first of our poets whose name we know, serve to remind us that the river which we call English Literature issues from a fountain of narrative poetry. In a generation which is rich in lyrics, as our own is, it is well to remember sometimes that the history of popular poetry, of the drama, and of the novel is indisputable evidence of the permanence of human interest in story. The point does not need to be argued; it requires only to be restated at a time when narrative poetry is not much cultivated. The mere mention of such poems as the *Iliad*, *Beowulf*, *The Song of Roland*, *The Story of the Niebelungs*, *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Idylls of the King* reminds us that the greatest poets of the world wrote stories in verse. The object of the present volume is to provide a collection of poems of moderate length for those who are not too old or too sophisticated to be delighted by narrative poetry.

A glance at the table of contents may cause a momentary surprise at the inclusion of some poems that are not obviously narrative. The principle, however, which underlies the selection is that nearly every piece either tells a story or inevitably suggests one. While *Lord Randal* is only a series of questions and answers, and Scott's *Border March* a pure lyric

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that actually requires music to make it thoroughly effective, in each case the reader's imagination at once sets about making up the story, or thousand and one stories, that fit the situation. In the case of a few poems such as *Pre-existence* and *Roundabouts and Swings*, the concreteness of the situation itself is the reason for their inclusion in a book of narrative poems.

On the subject of narrative poetry criticism maintains a curious silence. Much has been written about the epic, and much about narrative in verse, and whole libraries on poetry; but on the subject of poetic narrative little has been said. Perhaps the spirit which prompts this conspiracy of silence is beneficent on the whole, yet in a book of this kind something should be said about the essential qualities of narrative poetry. In the first place a narrative poem is the product of a writer who combines in himself the double rôle of story-teller and poet. Very frequently in narrative verse these rôles are divorced to such an extent that the net result is either versified story or imaginative poetry with only a slender thread of narrative. *Endymion, Childe Harold* and *The Rape of the Lock* are outstanding examples of the latter, while Southey's *Madoc* by general consent would walk very well in the garb of prose, and few would contend that *John Gilpin* is anything but a versified tale. In the best narrative poetry, however, the two functions are so thoroughly fused that the reader, or, better, the listener, is unconscious of anything but the progress of imaginative story—story first, with the poetry as a pervading undertone like the skilfully played accompaniment of a vocal

solo. The poet, like the good accompanist, never obtrudes himself. And yet the reader is conscious of something which vastly enhances the narrative, and without which the story, however adroitly constructed, would lack the individuality imparted to it by the peculiar genius of the poet. *The Ancient Mariner* is perhaps the supreme example of such fusion in English poetry; but there are numerous others that one would place in a rank only second to Coleridge's great performance: *Tam O'Shanter, The Eve of St. Agnes, Michael, Goblin Market, Childe Roland.* In compiling this book the editors have included no poem which, in their opinion, does not to some extent exhibit the fusion of the two elements of story and poetry. The degree of fusion, of course, varies with the poetic skill of the writer. In some of the poems there is an obvious attempt at poetic ornamentation, while in others the story element is emphasised.

From what has been said it follows that a good narrative poem cannot be turned into prose without losing its essential quality. The narrative itself may be retold as a very effective short story, but the tale in its new form must have an effect upon the reader different from that of the original poem; for the method, the devices, the imaginative embellishments —in short, the technique of the short story—are different in kind from those of the narrative poem. Take, for instance, Wilfred Gibson's *Flannan Isle.* The narrative advances smoothly until we are *in position,* so to speak, for the point of the story, and nothing happens. Yet no one would deny that *Flannan Isle* is an effective narrative poem. In fact it is effective largely by reason of the mystery in which the central

action is shrouded. As in a Greek tragedy, the catastrophe takes place off stage; unlike the ancient drama, however, the poem has no messenger to report what happened. But we do not want a messenger, nor do we desire a Sherlock Holmes to unravel for us the mystery. Such a method, effective in a narrative poem, is not the method of the short story, which normally requires, amongst other things, the rising interest, climax and conclusion. Mr. Gibson's poem is perhaps an extreme instance of the effect of unsolved or unsolvable mystery—the essence of romance; but similar effects are produced in varying degrees in many of the poems of this collection; for instance, in *The Lost Leader*, *Childe Roland* and *The Raven*.

Since the peculiar poetic flavour of a narrative poem is due to the individuality of the writer, it is well to consider that personality. No two poets would tell the same story in the same way or from the same point of view, because they differ in their habits of thought, their emotional natures and their modes of expression. This fact is attested by comparing Hunt's *Glove and the Lions* with Browning's poem *The Glove*, or Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* with the plays of Shakespeare and Dryden on the same subject. While it is impossible to " explain " the individuality of a writer, sometimes a knowledge of his life, of the nature of his genius, of the circumstances in which he wrote, and of the object he had in view, helps the reader to appreciate the particular poetic flavour of his work. An extreme case in point is Cowper's *Castaway*; but such knowledge also throws light upon the difference and affinity

between such poems as *Childe Roland* and *The Red Fisherman*, between *The Ancient Mariner* and *Brignall Banks*. And what shall be said of a poem like *Lord Randal*, typical of a kind of poetry which is characterised by the complete impersonality of the author? Simply this, that while the author is anonymous and has no individuality as a *person*, the ballad in question is one of the best examples of a type of poetry which reveals the personality of the *folk*, suggests their ways of making poetry, and memorably displays the passion and tragedy of their lives in such a climax as—

> "I leave her hell and fire; mother, mak my bed soon,
> For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wad lie down."

A few words should be said about the order of the poems in the book. The division into two parts is roughly on the basis of difficulty. The poems of the second part are, as a rule, somewhat more complicated in thought and expression, somewhat less obvious in their drift than those of the first part. As to the order of poems, the alphabetical arrangement by authors is frankly a denial that a logical classification is possible or desirable. A classification that could make any claim to completeness would at best be a forced one, and the reader would feel that he was asked to look at many poems from a point of view with which he did not agree, and would consequently be confused or irritated or both. For example, *Blenheim* might logically be called a poem of war, yet the reader would naturally object that it is the antithesis of a poem like *The Revenge*,

with which it would be classed. But while a full classification is impossible, undesirable and unprofitable, a few hints may be thrown out to aid the reader in grouping some of the poems. On the basis of subject-matter several obvious groups could be made. Poems of war and fighting have not received as large a share of recognition as is customary in anthologies of this kind, yet a considerable group represented by such pieces as *Ivry* and *Hervé Riel* could be made. Love is the subject of what would probably be the largest class, *The Lady of Shalott* and Noyes's *The Highwayman* being representative of the group. The reader may decide for himself whether *Goblin Market* should be classed with *Christmas at Sea* and *Forty Singing Seamen* as a poem of adventure. Poems which emphasise death have been purposely excluded from the collection, and yet a number of pieces in the book could be grouped under the heading "Death." In almost every case, however, it will be found that death is an incident, and, far from tinging the particular poem with gloom, imparts to it the exaltation which is the essence of true tragedy. Sir Richard's death in *The Revenge*, for example, is an occasion for enforcing the glory of a great achievement; and who would say that the dominant idea of *A Mother in Egypt* is death rather than maternal love? Changing the basis of classification, one might profitably group together on the basis of form the ballads beginning with *Lord Randal* and including the modern imitations of Scott and Coleridge. Humorous poems with an undertone of seriousness would include such pieces as *The*

Stone, The Glove and the Lions, and *Roundabouts and Swings*, and to this group *The Well of St. Keyne* might be added for want of a better place to put it. Various other combinations could be made with more or less damage to groups already indicated, but we shall not carry these suggestions further than to pause for a minute on a very striking group wherein terror of various kinds and degrees is the dominant tone. *Goblin Market* is a fairy tale with a pretty obvious allegory woven through its fantastic imagery. The terror, faintly suggested and happily overcome, is that which is connected with indulgence in the pleasures of sense. *The Ancient Mariner*, with its plainly pointed "lesson," is perhaps the highest expression in English poetry of the mysterious terror as well as of the splendour of the sea. Like the former poem, it has its humour, and as for grotesque imagery, the fancy

> "cannot pierce a wink beyond
> But doubts discovery there."

The counterpart, in a sense, of Coleridge's poem is *Childe Roland*, with its memorable landscape of boding horror, poisonous malignity and devastating terror, wrought in colours wildly extravagant. The humour of the piece is of the grimmest sort, and links Browning's poem with a fourth in the group, *The Red Fisherman*, which enforces the mental terror that follows ill-judged and overweening ambition. This group might be extended by the inclusion of *Flannan Isle* and perhaps one or two other pieces.

In handing the book over to the reader let us remark that "allegory," "lesson," "moral," need

not be sought where none is plainly marked. There is no reason why an allegorical interpretation should not be made if there is sufficient warrant for it in the text, since that is one of the ways the imagination frequently works, especially in young readers, who are incorrigible moralists. But why worry about a "lesson" when the poet has striven to enforce none?

Finally, it must be remembered that narrative poetry is first of all *poetry*; and as Shakespeare's plays are not ordinarily read as illustrations of dramatic laws, so the poems of this book should not be regarded primarily as exercises in narrative technique.

NOTE

The present book is a revised and slightly enlarged edition of our book, *Narrative English Poems*, published in 1925. The Department of Education of British Columbia, as the result of the experience of High School teachers of the Province who used the older book, thought that its usefulness and interest would be enlarged if more poems of an essentially lyric quality were added, and a few of the narrative poems dropped. The present edition is issued in deference to this considered opinion. In adding lyrical poems an attempt has been made to observe as far as possible the principle which governed the choice of poems in the older book, namely, to have a concrete situation as the core of each poem. In other words, we have tried to avoid as far as possible the purely meditative lyric. This principle, however, has not been strictly observed, and a glance at the table of contents will reveal a few such titles as *The Isles of Greece* and *Ode to Autumn*.

W. L. M.
F. C. W.

January, 1930.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For kind permission to reprint copyright poems our thanks are due to: Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd., for *Truly Great* by W. H. Davies, Patrick Chalmers for *Roundabouts and Swings*, Messrs. Chatto and Windus for *Christmas at Sea* by R. L. Stevenson, Mrs. Cornford and The Poetry Bookshop for *Pre-existence*, Mr. Alban Dobson and the Oxford University Press for *The Ladies of St. James's* by the late Austin Dobson, Messrs. Ellis for *My Sister's Sleep* and *John of Tours* by D. G. Rossetti, Wilfred Gibson and Messrs. Elkin Mathews, Ltd., for *Flannan Isle*, Lady Gilbert and Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., for *The Yarn of the Nancy Bell* from *The Bab Ballads* by Sir W. S. Gilbert, The Incorporated Society of Authors, Playwrights and Composers for *The Vagabond* by R. L. Stevenson from *Songs of Travel*, Rudyard Kipling and the Oxford University Press, Toronto, for *King Henry VII and the Shipwrights*, Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., for *The Revenge* by Lord Tennyson, Walter de la Mare for *Sam's Three Wishes*, Messrs. Elkin Mathews and Marrot for *The Joys of the Road* by Bliss Carman, Peter McArthur for *The Stone*, Messrs. McClelland & Stewart for *A Mother in Egypt* by Marjorie Pickthall and *Low Tide on Grand Pré* by Bliss Carman from *Ballads and Lyrics*, The Musson Book Co., Ltd., for *The Pilot of the Plains* from *Flint and Feather* by E. Pauline Johnson, Sir Henry Newbolt for *He Fell Among Thieves*, *Vitaï Lampada*, *Drake's Drum*, and *Sráhmandázi* from *Poems New and Old* as published by John Murray, Alfred Noyes and Messrs. W. Blackwood & Sons for *The Highwayman* and *Forty Singing Seamen*, Duncan C. Scott for *At The Cedars* and for Archibald

Lampman's *The Violinist,* The Poetry Bookshop and Harold Monro for *Dog,* and F. G. Scott for *The Feud.*

We further wish to express our appreciation to Dr. G. G. Sedgwick, head of the department of English, University of British Columbia, for his valuable advice while this book, and its predecessor, *Narrative English Poems,* was in the process of making; and to the Committee of High School teachers of English in the Province for very helpful suggestions and criticism both as to the table of contents and the notes.

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PART ONE

LORD RANDAL

" O WHERE ha you been, Lord Randal, my son?
And where ha you been, my handsome young man?"
" I ha been at the greenwood; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm wearied wi huntin, and fain wad lie down."

" An wha met ye there, Lord Randal, my son?
An wha met you there, my handsome young man?"
" O I met wi my true-love; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm wearied wi huntin, and fain wad lie down."

" And what did she give you, Lord Randal, my son?
And what did she give you, my handsome young man?"
" Eels fried in a pan; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm wearied wi huntin, and fain wad lie down."

" And wha gat your leavins, Lord Randal, my son?
And wha gat your leavins, my handsome young man?"
" My hawks and my hounds; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm wearied wi huntin, and fain wad lie down."

" And what becam of them, Lord Randal, my son?
And what becam of them, my handsome young man?"
" They stretched their legs out an died; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm wearied wi huntin, and fain wad lie down."

" O I fear you are poisoned, Lord Randal, my son !
I fear you are poisoned, my handsome young man ! "
" O yes, I am poisoned; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wad lie down."

" What d'ye leave to your mother, Lord Randal, my son?
What d'ye leave to your mother, my handsome young man? "
" Four and twenty milk kye; mother, mak my bed soon.
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wad lie down."

" What d'ye leave to your sister, Lord Randal, my son?
What d'ye leave to your sister, my handsome young man? "
" My gold and my silver; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wad lie down."

" What d'ye leave to your brother, Lord Randal, my son?
What d'ye leave to your brother, my handsome young man? "
" My houses and my lands; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wad lie down."

" What d'ye leave to your true-love, Lord Randal, my son?
What d'ye leave to your true-love, my handsome young man? "
" I leave her hell and fire; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wad lie down."

ANONYMOUS.

SIR PATRICK SPENS

THE king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
" Oh whar will I get guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine? "

Up and spak an eldern knicht
Sat at the kings richt kne :
" Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
That sails upon the se."

The king has written a braid letter,
And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.

" O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
To sail upon the se ! "

" Mak hast, mak hast, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne : "
" O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme."

" Late late yestreen I saw the new moone,
Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will cum to harme."

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone,
But lang owre a' the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair.

Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

ANONYMOUS.

ROSABELLE

O LISTEN, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

"Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle lady, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

"The blackening wave is edged with white;
To inch and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

"Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch;
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?"

"'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my lady-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

"'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."

—O'er Roslin all that dreary night
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
  It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
  And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud
  Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
  Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire within, around,
  Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
  And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
  Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
  The lordly line of high Saint Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
  Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
Each one the holy vault doth hold
  But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!

And each Saint Clair was buried there
  With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung
  The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

BRIGNALL BANKS

SONG

O, BRIGNALL banks are wild and fair,
  And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there,
  Would grace a summer queen.
And as I rode by Dalton-hall,
  Beneath the turrets high,

A Maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily,—
" O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
Than reign our English queen."

" If, Maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
To leave both tower and town,
Thou first must guess what life lead we,
That dwell by dale and down!
And if thou canst that riddle read,
As read full well you may,
Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
As blithe as Queen of May."—
Yet sung she, " Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
Than reign our English queen.

" I read you, by your bugle-horn,
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a ranger sworn,
To keep the king's greenwood."—
" A Ranger, lady, winds his horn,
And 'tis at peep of light;
His blast is heard at merry morn,
And mine at dead of night."—
Yet sung she, " Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are gay;
I would I were with Edmund there,
To reign his Queen of May!

" With burnish'd brand and musketoon,
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold Dragoon,
That lists the tuck of drum."—
" I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear.

And, O ! though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
Would reign my Queen of May !

" Maiden ! a nameless life I lead;
A nameless death I'll die !
The fiend whose lantern lights the mead
Were better mate than I !
And when I'm with my comrades met,
Beneath the greenwood bough,
What once we were we all forget,
Nor think what we are now.
Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen."

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE FEUD

" I HEAR a cry from the Sansard cave,
O mother, will no one hearken ?
A cry of the lost, will no one save ?
A cry of the dead, though the oceans rave,
And the scream of a gull as he wheels o'er a grave,
While the shadows darken and darken."

" Oh, hush thee, child, for the night is wet,
And the cloud-caves split asunder,
With lightning in a jagged fret,
Like the gleam of a salmon in the net,
When the rocks are rich in the red sunset,
And the stream rolls down in thunder."

" Mother, O mother, a pain at my heart,
A pang like the pang of dying."
" Oh, hush thee, child, for the wild birds dart
Up and down, and close and part,
Wheeling round where the black cliffs start,
And the foam at their feet is flying."

" O mother, a strife like the black clouds' strife,
And a peace that cometh after."
" Hush, child, for peace is the end of life,
And the heart of a maiden finds peace as a wife,
But the sky and the cliffs and the ocean are rife
With the storm and thunder's laughter.

" Come in, my sons, come in and rest,
For the shadows darken and darken,
And your sister is pale as the white swan's breast,
And her eyes are fixed and her lips are pressed
In the death of a name ye might have guessed,
Had ye twain been here to hearken."

" Hush, mother, a corpse lies on the sand,
And the spray is round it driven,
It lies on its face, and one white hand
Points through the mist on the belt of strand
To where the cliffs of Sansard stand,
And the ocean's strength is riven."

" Was it God, my sons, who laid him there?
Or the sea that left him sleeping? "
" Nay, mother, our dirks where his heart was bare,
As swift as the rain through the teeth of the air;
And the foam-fingers play in the Saxon's hair,
While the tides are round him creeping."

" Oh, curses on you, hand and head,
Like the rains in this wild weather,
The guilt of blood is swift and dread,
Your sister's face is cold and dead,
Ye may not part whom God would wed
And love hath knit together."

FREDERICK GEORGE SCOTT.

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

THAT second time they hunted me
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,
And Austria, hounding far and wide
Her blood-hounds thro' the country-side,

Breathed hot and instant on my trace,—
I made six days a hiding-place
Of that dry green old aqueduct
Where I and Charles, when boys, have plucked
The fire-flies from the roof above,
Bright creeping thro' the moss they love.
—How long it seems since Charles was lost!
Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed
The country in my very sight;
And when that peril ceased at night,
The sky broke out in red dismay
With signal-fires; well, there I lay
Close covered o'er in my recess,
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,
Thinking on Metternich our friend,
And Charles's miserable end,
And much beside, two days; the third,
Hunger o'ercame me when I heard
The peasants from the village go
To work among the maize; you know,
With us, in Lombardy, they bring
Provisions packed on mules, a string
With little bells that cheer their task,
And casks, and boughs on every cask
To keep the sun's heat from the wine;
These I let pass in jingling line,
And, close on them, dear noisy crew,
The peasants from the village, too;
For at the very rear would troop
Their wives and sisters in a group
To help, I knew; when these had passed,
I threw my glove to strike the last,
Taking the chance: she did not start,
Much less cry out, but stooped apart
One instant, rapidly glanced round,
And saw me beckon from the ground:
A wild bush grows and hides my crypt;
She picked my glove up while she stripped
A branch off, then rejoined the rest
With that; my glove lay in her breast:

Then I drew breath ; they disappeared :
It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone
Exactly where my glove was thrown.
Meanwhile came many thoughts; on me
Rested the hopes of Italy;
I had devised a certain tale
Which, when 'twas told her, could not fail
Persuade a peasant of its truth;
I meant to call a freak of youth
This hiding, and give hopes of pay,
And no temptation to betray.
But when I saw that woman's face,
Its calm simplicity of grace,
Our Italy's own attitude
In which she walked thus far, and stood,
Planting each naked foot so firm,
To crush the snake and spare the worm—
At first sight of her eyes, I said,
" I am that man upon whose head
They fix the price, because I hate
The Austrians over us : the State
Will give you gold—oh, gold so much—
If you betray me to their clutch,
And be your death, for aught I know,
If once they find you saved their foe.
Now, you must bring me food and drink,
And also paper, pen, and ink,
And carry safe what I shall write
To Padua, which you'll reach at night
Before the Duomo shuts; go in,
And wait till Tenebræ begin;
Walk to the third Confessional,
Between the pillar and the wall,
And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes peace?*
Say it a second time; then cease;
And if the voice inside returns,
From Christ and Freedom ; what concerns
The cause of Peace?—for answer, slip

My letter where you placed your lip;
Then come back happy we have done
Our mother service—I, the son,
As you the daughter of our land!"

Three mornings more, she took her stand
In the same place, with the same eyes:
I was no surer of sun-rise
Than of her coming. We conferred
Of her own prospects, and I heard
She had a lover—stout and tall,
She said—then let her eyelids fall,
"He could do much"—as if some doubt
Entered her heart,—then, passing out,
"She could not speak for others—who
Had other thoughts; herself she knew:"
And so she brought me drink and food.
After four days, the scouts pursued
Another path; at last arrived
The help my Paduan friends contrived
To furnish me: she brought the news.
For the first time I could not choose
But kiss her hand and lay my own
Upon her head—"This faith was shown
To Italy, our mother;—she
Uses my hand and blesses thee!"
She followed down to the sea-shore;
I left and never saw her more.

How very long since I have thought
Concerning—much less wished for—aught
Beside the good of Italy
For which I live and mean to die!
I never was in love; and since
Charles proved false, what shall now convince
My inmost heart I had a friend?
However, if I pleased to spend
Real wishes on myself—say, three—
I know at least what one should be.

I would grasp Metternich until
I felt his red wet throat distil
In blood thro' these two hands. And next,
—Nor much for that am I perplexed—
Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,
Should die slow of a broken heart
Under his new employers. Last
—Ah, there, what should I wish? For fast
Do I grow old and out of strength.—
If I resolved to seek at length
My father's house again, how scared
They all would look, and unprepared!
My brothers live in Austria's pay
—Disowned me long ago, men say;
And all my early mates who used
To praise me so—perhaps induced
More than one early step of mine—
Are turning wise; while some opine
"Freedom grows licence," some suspect
"Haste breeds delay," and recollect
They always said, such premature
Beginnings never could endure!
So, with a sullen "All's for best,"
The land seems settling to its rest.
I think, then, I should wish to stand
This evening in that dear, lost land,
Over the sea the thousand miles,
And know if yet that woman smiles
With the calm smile; some little farm
She lives in there, no doubt; what harm
If I sat on the door-side bench,
And, while her spindle made a trench
Fantastically in the dust,
Inquired of all her fortunes—just
Her children's ages and their names,
And what may be the husband's aims
For each of them. I'd talk this out,
And sit there, for an hour about,
Then kiss her hand once more, and lay
Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing—how
It steals the time! To business now!
ROBERT BROWNING.

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

IT was the season, when through all the land
The merle and mavis build, and building sing
Those lovely lyrics, written by His hand,
Whom Saxon Cædmon calls the Blitheheart King;
When on the boughs the purple buds expand,
The banners of the vanguard of the Spring,
And rivulets, rejoicing, rush and leap,
And wave their fluttering signals from the steep.

The robin and the bluebird, piping loud,
Filled all the blossoming orchards with their glee;
The sparrows chirped as if they still were proud
Their race in Holy Writ should mentioned be;
And hungry crows, assembled in a crowd,
Clamoured their piteous prayer incessantly,
Knowing who hears the raven's cry, and said:
"Give us, O Lord, this day our daily bread!"

Across the Sound the birds of passage sailed,
Speaking some unknown language strange and sweet
Of tropic isle remote, and passing hailed
The village with the cheers of all their fleet;
Or quarrelling together, laughed and railed
Like foreign sailors, landed in the street
Of seaport town, and with outlandish noise
Of oaths and gibberish frightening girls and boys.

Thus came the jocund Spring in Killingworth,
In fabulous days, some hundred years ago;
And thrifty farmers, as they tilled the earth,
Heard with alarm the cawing of the crow,
That mingled with the universal mirth,
Cassandra-like, prognosticating woe;

They shook their heads, and doomed with dreadful words
To swift destruction the whole race of birds.

And a town-meeting was convened straightway
To set a price upon the guilty heads
Of these marauders, who, in lieu of pay,
Levied blackmail upon the garden beds
And cornfields, and beheld without dismay
The awful scarecrow, with his fluttering shreds;
The skeleton that waited at their feast,
Whereby their sinful pleasure was increased.

Then from his house, a temple painted white,
With fluted columns, and a roof of red,
The Squire came forth, august and splendid sight!
Slowly descending, with majestic tread,
Three flights of steps, nor looking left nor right,
Down the long street he walked, as one who said,
"A town that boasts inhabitants like me
Can have no lack of good society!"

The Parson, too, appeared, a man austere,
The instinct of whose nature was to kill;
The wrath of God he preached from year to year,
And read, with fervour, Edwards on the Will;
His favourite pastime was to slay the deer
In summer on some Adirondac hill;
E'en now, while walking down the rural lane,
He lopped the wayside lilies with his cane.

From the Academy, whose belfry crowned
The hill of Science with its vane of brass,
Came the Preceptor, gazing idly round,
Now at the clouds, and now at the green grass,
And all absorbed in reveries profound
Of fair Almira in the upper class,
Who was, as in a sonnet he had said,
As pure as water, and as good as bread.

And next the Deacon issued from his door,
In his voluminous neckcloth white as snow;
A suit of sable bombazine he wore;
His form was ponderous, and his step was slow;
There never was so wise a man before;
He seemed the incarnate "Well, I told you so!"
And to perpetuate his great renown
There was a street named after him in town.

These came together in the new town-hall,
With sundry farmers from the region round.
The Squire presided, dignified and tall,
His air impressive and his reasoning sound:
Ill fared it with the birds, both great and small;
Hardly a friend in all that crowd they found,
But enemies enough, who every one
Charged them with all the crimes beneath the sun.

When they had ended, from his place apart,
Rose the Preceptor, to redress the wrong,
And, trembling like a steed before the start,
Looked round bewildered on the expectant throng;
Then thought of fair Almira, and took heart
To speak out what was in him, clear and strong,
Alike regardless of their smile or frown,
And quite determined not to be laughed down.

"Plato, anticipating the Reviewers,
From his Republic banished without pity
The Poets; in this little town of yours,
You put to death, by means of a Committee,
The ballad-singers and the Troubadours,
The street-musicians of the heavenly city,—
The birds,—who make sweet music for us all
In our dark hours, as David did for Saul.

"The thrush that carols at the dawn of day
From the green steeples of the piny wood;
The oriole in the elm; the noisy jay,
Jargoning like a foreigner at his food;

The bluebird balanced on some topmost spray,
Flooding with melody the neighbourhood;
Linnet and meadow-lark, and all the throng
That dwell in nests, and have the gift of song.

"You slay them all! and wherefore? for the gain
Of a scant handful more or less of wheat,
Or rye, or barley, or some other grain,
Scratched up at random by industrious feet,
Searching for worm or weevil after rain!
Or a few cherries, that are not so sweet
As are the songs these uninvited guests
Sing at their feast with comfortable breasts.

"Do you ne'er think what wondrous beings these?
Do you ne'er think who made them, and who taught
The dialect they speak, where melodies
Alone are the interpreters of thought?
Whose household words are songs in many keys,
Sweeter than instrument of man e'er caught!
Whose habitations in the tree-tops even
Are half-way houses on the road to heaven!

"Think, every morning when the sun peeps through
The dim, leaf-latticed windows of the grove,
How jubilant the happy birds renew
Their old, melodious madrigals of love!
And when you think of this, remember too
'Tis always morning somewhere, and above
The awakening continents, from shore to shore,
Somewhere the birds are singing evermore.

"Think of your woods and orchards without birds!
Of empty nests that cling to boughs and beams
As in an idiot's brain remembered words
Hang empty 'mid the cobwebs of his dreams!
Will bleat of flocks or bellowing of herds
Make up for the lost music, when your teams
Drag home the stingy harvest, and no more
The feathered gleaners follow to your door?

" What ! would you rather see the incessant stir
Of insects in the windrows of the hay,
And hear the locust and the grasshopper
Their melancholy hurdy-gurdies play?
Is this more pleasant to you than the whirr
Of meadow-lark, and her sweet roundelay,
Or twitter of little field-fares, as you take
Your nooning in the shade of bush and brake?

" You call them thieves and pillagers; but know,
They are the winged wardens of your farms,
Who from the cornfields drive the insidious foe,
And from your harvests keep a hundred harms;
Even the blackest of them all, the crow,
Renders good service as your man-at-arms,
Crushing the beetle in his coat of mail,
And crying havoc on the slug and snail.

" How can I teach your children gentleness,
And mercy to the weak, and reverence
For Life, which, in its weakness or excess,
Is still a gleam of God's omnipotence,
Or Death, which, seeming darkness, is no less
The self-same light, although averted hence,
When by your laws, your actions, and your speech,
You contradict the very things I teach? "

With this he closed; and through the audience went
A murmur, like the rustle of dead leaves;
The farmers laughed and nodded, and some bent
Their yellow heads together like their sheaves;
Men have no faith in fine-spun sentiment
Who put their trust in bullocks and in beeves.
The birds were doomed; and, as the record shows,
A bounty offered for the heads of crows.

There was another audience out of reach,
Who had no voice nor vote in making laws,
But in the papers read his little speech,
And crowned his modest temples with applause;

They made him conscious, each one more than each,
He still was victor, vanquished in their cause.
Sweetest of all the applause he won from thee,
O fair Almira at the Academy!

And so the dreadful massacre began;
O'er fields and orchards, and o'er woodland crests,
The ceaseless fusillade of terror ran.
Dead fell the birds, with blood-stains on their breasts.
Or wounded crept away from sight of man.
While the young died of famine in their nests;
A slaughter to be told in groans, not words,
The very St. Bartholomew of Birds!

The Summer came, and all the birds were dead;
The days were like hot coals; the very ground
Was burned to ashes; in the orchards fed
Myriads of caterpillars, and around
The cultivated fields and garden beds
Hosts of devouring insects crawled, and found
No foe to check their march, till they had made
The land a desert without leaf or shade.

Devoured by worms, like Herod, was the town,
Because, like Herod, it had ruthlessly
Slaughtered the Innocents. From the trees spun down
The cankerworms upon the passers-by,
Upon each woman's bonnet, shawl, and gown,
Who shook them off with just a little cry;
They were the terror of each favourite walk,
The endless theme of all the village talk.

The farmers grew impatient, but a few
Confessed their error, and would not complain,
For after all, the best thing one can do
When it is raining, is to let it rain.
Then they repealed the law, although they knew
It would not call the dead to life again;
As schoolboys, finding their mistake too late,
Draw a wet sponge across the accusing slate.

That year in Killingworth the Autumn came
Without the light of his majestic look,
The wonder of the falling tongues of flame,
The illumined pages of his Doomsday book.
A few lost leaves blushed crimson with their shame,
And drowned themselves despairing in the brook,
While the wild wind went moaning everywhere,
Lamenting the dead children of the air!

But the next Spring, a stranger sight was seen,
A sight that never yet by bard was sung,
As great a wonder as it would have been
If some dumb animal had found a tongue!
A wagon, overarched with evergreen,
Upon whose boughs were wicker cages hung,
All full of singing birds, came down the street,
Filling the air with music wild and sweet.

From all the country round these birds were brought,
By order of the town, with anxious quest,
And, loosened from their wicker prisons, sought
In woods and fields the places they loved best,
Singing loud canticles, which many thought
Were satires to the authorities addressed,
While others, listening in green lanes, averred
Such lovely music never had been heard!

But blither still and louder carolled they
Upon the morrow, for they seemed to know
It was the fair Almira's wedding-day,
And everywhere, around, above, below,
When the Preceptor bore his bride away,
Their songs burst forth in joyous overflow,
And a new heaven bent over a new earth
Amid the sunny farms of Killingworth.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

TO DAFFODILS

FAIR Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon:
As yet the early-rising Sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a Spring!
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or any thing.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew
Ne'er to be found again.

R. HERRICK.

THE DAFFODILS

I WANDER'D lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—
A Poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company!
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought;

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

ATALANTA'S RACE

I

THROUGH thick Arcadian woods a hunter went,
Following the beasts up, on a fresh spring day;
But since his horn-tipped bow but seldom bent,
Now at the noontide nought had happed to slay,
Within a vale he called his hounds away,
Hearkening the echoes of his lone voice cling
About the cliffs and through the beech-trees ring.

But when they ended, still awhile he stood,
And but the sweet familiar thrush could hear,
And all the day-long noises of the wood,
And o'er the dry leaves of the vanished year
His hounds' feet pattering as they drew anear,
And heavy breathing from their heads low hung,
To see the mighty cornel bow unstrung.

Then smiling did he turn to leave the place,
But with his first step some new fleeting thought
A shadow cast across his sun-burnt face;
I think the golden net that April brought
From some warm world his wavering soul had caught;
For, sunk in vague sweet longing, did he go
Betwixt the trees with doubtful steps and slow.

Yet howsoever slow he went, at last
The trees grew sparser, and the wood was done;
Whereon one farewell, backward look he cast,
Then, turning round to see what place was won,
With shaded eyes looked underneath the sun,
And o'er green meads and new-turned furrows brown
Beheld the gleaming of King Schœneus' town.

So thitherward he turned, and on each side
The folk were busy on the teeming land,
And man and maid from the brown furrows cried,
Or midst the newly-blossomed vines did stand,
And as the rustic weapon pressed the hand
Thought of the nodding of the well-filled ear,
Or how the knife the heavy bunch should shear.

Merry it was: about him sung the birds,
The spring flowers bloomed along the firm dry road,
The sleek-skinned mothers of the sharp-horned herds
Now for the barefoot milking-maidens lowed;
While from the freshness of his blue abode,
Glad his death-bearing arrows to forget,
The broad sun blazed, nor scattered plagues as yet.

Through such fair things unto the gates he came,
And found them open, as though peace were there;
Wherethrough, unquestioned of his race or name,
He entered, and along the streets 'gan fare,
Which at the first of folk were well-nigh bare;
But pressing on, and going more hastily,
Men hurrying too he 'gan at last to see.

Following the last of these, he still pressed on,
Until an open space he came unto,
Where wreaths of fame had oft been lost and won,
For feats of strength folk there were wont to do.
And now our hunter looked for something new,
Because the whole wide space was bare, and stilled
The high seats were, with eager people filled.

There with the others to a seat he gat,
Whence he beheld a broidered canopy,
'Neath which in fair array King Schœneus sat
Upon his throne with councillors thereby;
And underneath his well-wrought seat and high,
He saw a golden image of the sun,
A silver image of the Fleet-foot One.

A brazen altar stood beneath their feet
Whereon a thin flame flickered in the wind;
Nigh this a herald clad in raiment meet
Made ready even now his horn to wind,
By whom a huge man held a sword, entwined
With yellow flowers; these stood a little space
From off the altar, nigh the starting-place.

And there two runners did the sign abide
Foot set to foot,—a young man slim and fair,
Crisp-haired, well knit, with firm limbs often tried
In places where no man his strength may spare;
Dainty his thin coat was, and on his hair
A golden circlet of renown he wore,
And in his hand an olive garland bore.

But on this day with whom shall he contend?
A maid stood by him like Diana clad
When in the woods she lists her bow to bend,
Too fair for one to look on and be glad,
Who scarcely yet has thirty summers had,
If he must still behold her from afar;
Too fair to let the world live free from war.

She seemed all earthly matters to forget;
Of all tormenting lines her face was clear,
Her wide grey eyes upon the goal were set
Calm and unmoved as though no soul were near.
But her foe trembled as a man in fear,
Nor from her loveliness one moment turned
His anxious face with fierce desire that burned.

Now through the hush there broke the trumpet's clang
Just as the setting sun made eventide.
Then from light feet a spurt of dust there sprang,
And swiftly were they running side by side;
But silent did the thronging folk abide
Until the turning-post was reached at last,
And round about it still abreast they passed.

But when the people saw how close they ran,
When halfway to the starting-point they were,
A cry of joy broke forth, whereat the man
Headed the white-foot runner, and drew near
Unto the very end of all his fear;
And scarce his straining feet the ground could feel,
And bliss unhoped for o'er his heart 'gan steal.

But midst the loud victorious shouts he heard
Her footsteps drawing nearer, and the sound
Of fluttering raiment, and thereat afeard
His flushed and eager face he turned around,
And even then he felt her past him bound
Fleet as the wind, but scarcely saw her there
Till on the goal she laid her fingers fair.

There stood she breathing like a little child
Amid some warlike clamour laid asleep,
For no victorious joy her red lips smiled,
Her cheek its wonted freshness did but keep;
No glance lit up her clear grey eyes and deep,
Though some divine thought softened all her face
As once more rang the trumpet through the place.

But her late foe stopped short amidst his course,
One moment gazed upon her piteously,
Then with a groan his lingering feet did force
To leave the spot whence he her eyes could see;
And, changed like one who knows his time must be
But short and bitter, without any word
He knelt before the bearer of the sword;

Then high rose up the gleaming deadly blade,
Bared of its flowers, and through the crowded place
Was silence now, and midst of it the maid
Went by the poor wretch at a gentle pace,
And he to hers upturned his sad white face;
Nor did his eyes behold another sight
Ere on his soul there fell eternal night.

II

So was the pageant ended, and all folk
Talking of this and that familiar thing
In little groups from that sad concourse broke,
For now the shrill bats were upon the wing,
And soon dark night would slay the evening,
And in dark gardens sang the nightingale
Her little-heeded, oft-repeated tale.

And with the last of all the hunter went,
Who, wondering at the strange sight he had seen,
Prayed an old man to tell him what it meant,
Both why the vanquished man so slain had been,
And if the maiden were an earthly queen,
Or rather what much more she seemed to be,
No sharer in the world's mortality.

" Stranger," said he, " I pray she soon may die
Whose lovely youth has slain so many an one !
King Schœneus' daughter is she verily,
Who when her eyes first looked upon the sun
Was fain to end her life but new begun,
For he had vowed to leave but men alone
Sprung from his loins when he from earth was gone.

" Therefore he bade one leave her in the wood,
And let wild things deal with her as they might;
But this being done, some cruel god thought good
To save her beauty in the world's despite :
Folk say that her, so delicate and white
As now she is, a rough root-grubbing bear
Amidst her shapeless cubs at first did rear.

" In course of time the woodfolk slew her nurse,
And to their rude abode the youngling brought,
And reared her up to be a kingdom's curse,
Who grown a woman, of no kingdom thought,
But armed and swift, 'mid beasts destruction wrought,
Nor spared two shaggy centaur kings to slay
To whom her body seemed an easy prey.

" So to this city, led by fate, she came,
Whom, known by signs, whereof I cannot tell,
King Schœneus for his child at last did claim,
Nor otherwhere since that day doth she dwell
Sending too many a noble soul to hell.—
What ! thine eyes glisten ! what then, thinkest thou
Her shining head unto the yoke to bow?

" Listen, my son, and love some other maid,
For she the saffron gown will never wear,
And on no flower-strewn couch shall she be laid,
Nor shall her voice make glad a lover's ear:
Yet if of Death thou hast not any fear,
Yea, rather, if thou lovest him utterly,
Thou still may'st woo her ere thou com'st to die,

" Like him that on this day thou sawest lie dead;
For, fearing as I deem the Sea-born One,
The maid has vowed e'en such a man to wed
As in the course her swift feet can outrun,
But whoso fails herein, his days are done:
He came the nighest that was slain to-day,
Although with him I deem she did but play.

" Behold, such mercy Atalanta gives
To those that long to win her loveliness;
Be wise ! be sure that many a maid there lives
Gentler than she, of beauty little less,
Whose swimming eyes thy loving words shall bless,
When in some garden, knee set close to knee,
Thou sing'st the song that love may teach to thee."

So to the hunter spake that ancient man,
And left him for his own home presently :
But he turned round, and through the moonlight wan
Reached the thick wood, and there 'twixt tree and tree
Distraught he passed the long night feverishly,
'Twixt sleep and waking, and at dawn arose
To wage hot war against his speechless foes.

There to the hart's flank seemed his shaft to grow,
As panting down the broad green glades he flew,
There by his horn the Dryads well might know
His thrust against the bear's heart had been true,
And there Adonis' bane his javelin slew,
But still in vain through rough and smooth he went,
For none the more his restlessness was spent.

So wandering, he to Argive cities came,
And in the lists with valiant men he stood,
And by great deeds he won him praise and fame,
And heaps of wealth for little-valued blood;
But none of all these things, or life, seemed good
Unto his heart, where still unsatisfied
A ravenous longing warred with fear and pride.

Therefore it happed when but a month had gone
Since he had left King Schœneus' city old,
In hunting-gear again, again alone
The forest-bordered meads did he behold,
Where still mid thoughts of August's quivering gold
Folk hoed the wheat, and clipped the vine in trust
Of faint October's purple-foaming must.

And once again he passed the peaceful gate,
While to his beating heart his lips did lie,
That owning not victorious love and fate,
Said, half aloud, " And here too must I try,
To win of alien men the mastery,
And gather for my head fresh meed of fame
And cast new glory on my father's name."

In spite of that, how beat his heart when first
Folk said to him, " And art thou come to see
That which still makes our city's name accurst
Among all mothers for its cruelty?
Then know indeed that fate is good to thee
Because to-morrow a new luckless one
Against the whitefoot maid is pledged to run."

So on the morrow with no curious eyes
As once he did, that piteous sight he saw,
Nor did that wonder in his heart arise
As toward the goal the conquering maid 'gan draw,
Nor did he gaze upon her eyes with awe,
Too full the pain of longing filled his heart
For fear or wonder there to have a part.

But O, how long the night was ere it went!
How long it was before the dawn begun
Showed to the wakening birds the sun's intent
That not in darkness should the world be done!
And then, and then, how long before the sun
Bade silently the toilers of the earth
Get forth to fruitless cares or empty mirth!

And long it seemed that in the market-place
He stood and saw the chaffering folk go by,
Ere from the ivory throne King Schœneus' face
Looked down upon the murmur royally,
But then came trembling that the time was nigh
When he midst pitying looks his love must claim,
And jeering voices must salute his name.

But as the throng he pierced to gain the throne,
His alien face distraught and anxious told
What hopeless errand he was bound upon,
And, each to each, folk whispered to behold
His godlike limbs; nay, and one woman old
As he went by must pluck him by the sleeve
And pray him yet that wretched love to leave.

For sidling up she said, " Canst thou live twice,
Fair son? canst thou have joyful youth again,
That thus thou goest to the sacrifice
Thyself the victim? nay then, all in vain
Thy mother bore her longing and her pain,
And one more maiden on the earth must dwell
Hopeless of joy, nor fearing death and hell.

" O, fool, thou knowest not the compact then
That with the three-formed goddess she has made
To keep her from the loving lips of men,
And in no saffron gown to be arrayed,
And therewithal with glory to be paid,
And love of her the moonlit river sees
White 'gainst the shadow of the formless trees.

" Come back, and I myself will pray for thee
Unto the sea-born framer of delights,
To give thee her who on the earth may be
The fairest stirrer-up to death and fights,
To quench with hopeful days and joyous nights
The flame that doth thy youthful heart consume:
Come back, nor give thy beauty to the tomb."

How should he listen to her earnest speech?
Words, such as he not once or twice had said
Unto himself, whose meaning scarce could reach
The firm abode of that sad hardihead—
He turned about, and through the marketstead
Swiftly he passed, until before the throne
In the cleared space he stood at last alone.

Then said the King, " Stranger, what dost thou here?
Have any of my folk done ill to thee?
Or art thou of the forest men in fear?
Or art thou of the sad fraternity
Who still will strive my daughter's mates to be,
Staking their lives to win to earthly bliss
The lonely maid, the friend of Artemis? "

" O King," he said, " thou sayest the word indeed;
Nor will I quit the strife till I have won
My sweet delight, or death to end my need.
And know that I am called Milanion,
Of King Amphidamas the well-loved son:
So fear not that to thy old name, O King,
Much loss or shame my victory will bring."

" Nay, Prince," said Schœneus, " welcome to this land
Thou wert indeed, if thou wert here to try
Thy strength 'gainst some one mighty of his hand;
Nor would we grudge thee well-won mastery.
But now, why wilt thou come to me to die,
And at my door lay down thy luckless head,
Swelling the band of the unhappy dead,

" Whose curses even now my heart doth fear?
Lo, I am old, and know what life can be,
And what a bitter thing is death anear.
O Son! be wise, and hearken unto me,
And if no other can be dear to thee,
At least as now, yet is the world full wide,
And bliss in seeming hopeless hearts may hide:

" But if thou losest life, then all is lost."
" Nay, King," Milanion said, " thy words are vain.
Doubt not that I have counted well the cost.
But say, on what day wilt thou that I gain
Fulfilled delight, or death to end my pain?
Right glad were I if it could be to-day,
And all my doubts at rest for ever lay."

" Nay," said King Schœneus, " thus it shall not be,
But rather shalt thou let a month go by,
And weary with thy prayers for victory
What god thou know'st the kindest and most nigh.
So doing, still perchance thou shalt not die:
And with my goodwill wouldst thou have the maid,
For of the equal gods I grow afraid.

" And until then, O Prince, be thou my guest,
And all these troublous things awhile forget."
" Nay," said he, " couldst thou give my soul good rest,
And on mine head a sleepy garland set,
Then had I 'scaped the meshes of the net,
Nor shouldst thou hear from me another word;
But now, make sharp thy fearful heading sword.

" Yet will I do what son of man may do,
And promise all the gods may most desire,
That to myself I may at least be true;
And on that day my heart and limbs so tire,
With utmost strain and measureless desire,
That, at the worst, I may but fall asleep
When in the sunlight round that sword shall sweep."

He went with that, nor anywhere would bide,
But unto Argos restlessly did wend;
And there, as one who lays all hope aside,
Because the leech has said his life must end,
Silent farewell he bade to foe and friend,
And took his way unto the restless sea,
For there he deemed his rest and help might be.

III

Upon the shore of Argolis there stands
A temple to the goddess that he sought,
That, turned unto the lion-bearing lands,
Fenced from the east, of cold winds hath no thought,
Though to no homestead there the sheaves are brought,
No groaning press torments the close-clipp'd murk,
Lonely the fane stands, far from all men's work.

Pass through a close, set thick with myrtle-trees,
Through the brass doors that guard the holy place,
And entering, hear the washing of the seas
That twice a day rise high above the base,
And with the south-west urging them, embrace
The marble feet of her that standeth there
That shrink not, naked though they be and fair.

Small is the fane through which the seawind sings
About Queen Venus' well-wrought image white,
But hung around are many precious things,
The gifts of those who, longing for delight,
Have hung them there within the goddess' sight,
And in return have taken at her hands
The living treasures of the Grecian lands.

And thither now has come Milanion,
And showed unto the priests' wide open eyes
Gifts fairer than all those that there have shone,
Silk cloths, inwrought with Indian fantasies,
And bowls inscribed with sayings of the wise
Above the deeds of foolish living things,
And mirrors fit to be the gifts of kings.

And now before the Sea-born One he stands,
By the sweet veiling smoke made dim and soft,
And while the incense trickles from his hands,
And while the odorous smoke-wreaths hang aloft,
Thus doth he pray to her: "O Thou, who oft
Hast holpen man and maid in their distress,
Despise me not for this my wretchedness!

"O goddess, among us who dwell below,
Kings and great men, great for a little while,
Have pity on the lowly heads that bow,
Nor hate the hearts that love them without guile;
Wilt thou be worse than these, and is thy smile
A vain device of him who set thee here,
An empty dream of some artificer?

"O, great one, some men love, and are ashamed,
Some men are weary of the bonds of love;
Yea, and by some men lightly art thou blamed,
That from thy toils their lives they cannot move,
And 'mid the ranks of men their manhood prove.
Alas! O goddess, if thou slayest me
What new immortal can I serve but thee?

" Think then, will it bring honour to thy head
If folk say, ' Everything aside he cast
And to all fame and honour was he dead,
And to his one hope now is dead at last,
Since all unholpen he is gone and past :
Ah, the gods love not man, for certainly,
He to his helper did not cease to cry.'

" Nay, but thou wilt help; they who died before
Not single-hearted, as I deem, came here,
Therefore unthanked they laid their gifts before
Thy stainless feet, still shivering with their fear,
Lest in their eyes their true thought might appear,
Who sought to be the lords of that fair town,
Dreaded of men and winners of renown.

" O Queen, thou knowest I pray not for this :
O set us down together in some place
Where not a voice can break our heaven of bliss,
Where nought but rocks and I can see her face,
Softening beneath the marvel of thy grace,
Where not a foot our vanished steps can track—
The golden age, the golden age come back !

" O fairest, hear me now who do thy will,
Plead for thy rebel that she be not slain,
But live and love and be thy servant still;
Ah, give her joy and take away my pain,
And thus two long-enduring servants gain.
An easy thing this is to do for me,
What need of my vain words to weary thee !

" But none the less, this place will I not leave
Until I needs must go my death to meet,
Or at thy hands some happy sign receive
That in great joy we twain may one day greet
Thy presence here and kiss thy silver feet,
Such as we deem thee, fair beyond all words,
Victorious o'er our servants and our lords."

Then from the altar back a space he drew,
But from the Queen turned not his face away,
But 'gainst a pillar leaned, until the blue
That arched the sky, at ending of the day,
Was turned to ruddy gold and changing grey,
And clear, but low, the nigh-ebbed windless sea
In the still evening murmured ceaselessly.

And there he stood when all the sun was down,
Nor had he moved when the dim golden light,
Like the far lustre of a godlike town,
Had left the world to seeming hopeless night,
Nor would he move the more when wan moonlight
Streamed through the pillars for a little while,
And lighted up the white Queen's changeless smile.

Nought noted he the shallow flowing sea
As step by step it set the wrack a-swim,
The yellow torchlight nothing noted he
Wherein with fluttering gown and half-bared limb
The temple damsels sung their midnight hymn,
And nought the doubled stillness of the fane
When they were gone and all was hushed again.

But when the waves had touched the marble base,
And steps the fish swim over twice a-day,
The dawn beheld him sunken in his place
Upon the floor; and sleeping there he lay,
Not heeding aught the little jets of spray
The roughened sea brought nigh, across him cast,
For as one dead all thought from him had passed.

Yet long before the sun had showed his head,
Long ere the varied hangings on the wall
Had gained once more their blue and green and red,
He rose as one some well-known sign doth call
When war upon the city's gates doth fall,
And scarce like one fresh risen out of sleep,
He 'gan again his broken watch to keep.

Then he turned round; not for the sea-gull's cry
That wheeled above the temple in his flight,
Not for the fresh south wind that lovingly
Breathed on the new-born day and dying night,
But some strange hope 'twixt fear and great delight
Drew round his face, now flushed, now pale and wan,
And still constrained his eyes the sea to scan.

Now a faint light lit up the southern sky,
Not sun or moon, for all the world was grey,
But this a bright cloud seemed, that drew anigh,
Lighting the dull waves that beneath it lay
As toward the temple still it took its way,
And still grew greater, till Milanion
Saw nought for dazzling light that round him shone.

But as he staggered with his arms outspread,
Delicious unnamed odours breathed around;
For languid happiness he bowed his head,
And with wet eyes sank down upon the ground,
Nor wished for aught, nor any dream he found
To give him reason for that happiness,
Or make him ask more knowledge of his bliss.

At last his eyes were cleared, and he could see
Through happy tears the goddess face to face
With that faint image of Divinity,
Whose well-wrought smile and dainty changeless grace
Until that morn so gladdened all the place;
Then he unwitting cried aloud her name
And covered up his eyes for fear and shame.

But through the stillness he her voice could hear
Piercing his heart with joy scarce bearable,
That said, " Milanion, wherefore dost thou fear?
I am not hard to those who love me well;
List to what I a second time will tell,
And thou mayest hear perchance, and live to save
The cruel maiden from a loveless grave.

" See, by my feet three golden apples lie—
Such fruit among the heavy roses falls,
Such fruit my watchful damsels carefully
Store up within the best loved of my walls,
Ancient Damascus, where the lover calls
Above my unseen head, and faint and light
The rose-leaves flutter round me in the night.

" And note, that these are not alone most fair
With heavenly gold, but longing strange they bring
Unto the hearts of men, who will not care,
Beholding these, for any once-loved thing
Till round the shining sides their fingers cling.
And thou shalt see thy well-girt swiftfoot maid
By sight of these amid her glory stayed.

" For bearing these within a scrip with thee,
When first she heads thee from the starting-place
Cast down the first one for her eyes to see,
And when she turns aside make on apace,
And if again she heads thee in the race
Spare not the other two to cast aside
If she not long enough behind will bide.

" Farewell, and when has come the happy time
That she Diana's raiment must unbind
And all the world seems blessed with Saturn's clime,
And thou with eager arms about her twined
Beholdest first her grey eyes growing kind,
Surely, O trembler, thou shalt scarcely then
Forget the Helper of unhappy men."

Milanion raised his head at this last word,
For now so soft and kind she seemed to be
No longer of her Godhead was he feared;
Too late he looked, for nothing could he see
But the white image glimmering doubtfully
In the departing twilight cold and grey,
And those three apples on the steps that lay.

These then he caught up quivering with delight,
Yet fearful lest it all might be a dream,
And though aweary with the watchful night,
And sleepless nights of longing, still did deem
He could not sleep; but yet the first sunbeam
That smote the fane across the heaving deep
Shone on him laid in calm untroubled sleep.

But little ere the noontide did he rise,
And why he felt so happy scarce could tell
Until the gleaming apples met his eyes.
Then leaving the fair place where this befell
Oft he looked back as one who loved it well,
Then homeward to the haunts of men 'gan wend
To bring all things unto a happy end.

IV

Now has the lingering month at last gone by,
Again are all folk round the running place,
Nor other seems the dismal pageantry
Than heretofore, but that another face
Looks o'er the smooth course ready for the race,
For now, beheld of all, Milanion
Stands on the spot he twice has looked upon.

But yet—what change is this that holds the maid?
Does she indeed see in his glittering eye
More than disdain of the sharp shearing blade,
Some happy hope of help and victory?
The others seemed to say, "We come to die;
Look down upon us for a little while,
That, dead, we may bethink us of thy smile."

But he—what look of mastery was this
He cast on her? why were his lips so red?
Why was his face so flushed with happiness?
So looks not one who deems himself but dead,
E'en if to death he bows a willing head;
So rather looks a god well pleased to find
Some earthly damsel fashioned to his mind.

Why must she drop her lids before his gaze,
And even as she casts adown her eyes
Redden to note his eager glance of praise,
And wish that she were clad in other guise?
Why must the memory to her heart arise
Of things unnoticed when they first were heard,
Some lover's song, some answering maiden's word?

What makes these longings, vague, without a name,
And this vain pity never felt before,
This sudden languor, this contempt of fame,
This tender sorrow for the time past o'er,
These doubts that grow each minute more and more?
Why does she tremble as the time grows near,
And weak defeat and woeful victory fear?

But while she seemed to hear her beating heart,
Above their heads the trumpet blast rang out
And forth they sprang; and she must play her part.
Then flew her white feet, knowing not a doubt,
Though slackening once, she turned her head about,
But then she cried aloud and faster fled
Than e'er before, and all men deemed him dead.

But with no sound he raised aloft his hand,
And thence what seemed a ray of light there flew
And past the maid rolled on along the sand;
Then trembling she her feet together drew
And in her heart a strong desire there grew
To have the toy; some god she thought had given
That gift to her, to make of earth a heaven.

Then from the course with eager steps she ran,
And in her odorous bosom laid the gold.
But when she turned again, the great-limbed man
Now well ahead she failed not to behold,
And mindful of her glory waxing cold,
Sprang up and followed him in hot pursuit,
Though with one hand she touched the golden fruit.

Note too, the bow that she was wont to bear
She laid aside to grasp the glittering prize,
And o'er her shoulder from the quiver fair
Three arrows fell and lay before her eyes
Unnoticed, as amidst the people's cries
She sprang to head the strong Milanion,
Who now the turning-post had well-nigh won.

But as he set his mighty hand on it
White fingers underneath his own were laid,
And white limbs from his dazzled eyes did flit,
Then he the second fruit cast by the maid,
But she ran on awhile, then as afraid
Wavered and stopped, and turned and made no stay,
Until the globe with its bright fellow lay.

Then, as a troubled glance she cast around
Now far ahead the Argive could she see,
And in her garment's hem one hand she wound
To keep the double prize, and strenuously
Sped o'er the course, and little doubt had she
To win the day, though now but scanty space
Was left betwixt him and the winning place.

Short was the way unto such winged feet,
Quickly she gained upon him till at last
He turned about her eager eyes to meet
And from his hand the third fair apple cast.
She wavered not, but turned and ran so fast
After the prize that should her bliss fulfil,
That in her hand it lay ere it was still.

Nor did she rest, but turned about to win
Once more, an unblest woeful victory—
And yet—and yet—why does her breath begin
To fail her, and her feet drag heavily?
Why fails she now to see if far or nigh
The goal is? why do her grey eyes grow dim?
Why do these tremors run through every limb?

She spreads her arms abroad some stay to find
Else must she fall, indeed, and findeth this,
A strong man's arms about her body twined.
Nor may she shudder now to feel his kiss,
So wrapped she is in new unbroken bliss:
Made happy that the foe the prize hath won,
She weeps glad tears for all her glory done.

V

SHATTER the trumpet, hew adown the posts!
Upon the brazen altar break the sword,
And scatter incense to appease the ghosts
Of those who died here by their own award.
Bring forth the image of the mighty Lord,
And her who unseen o'er the runners hung,
And did a deed for ever to be sung.

Here are the gathered folk, make no delay,
Open King Schœneus' well-filled treasury,
Bring out the gifts long hid from light of day,
The golden bowls o'erwrought with imagery,
Gold chains, and unguents brought from over sea,
The saffron gown the old Phœnician brought,
Within the temple of the Goddess wrought.

O ye, O damsels, who shall never see
Her, that Love's servant bringeth now to you,
Returning from another victory,
In some cool bower do all that now is due!
Since she in token of her service new
Shall give to Venus offerings rich enow,
Her maiden zone, her arrows, and her bow.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

FLANNAN ISLE

"THOUGH three men dwell on Flannan Isle
To keep the lamp alight,
As we steered under the lee, we caught
No glimmer through the night!"

A passing ship at dawn had brought
The news; and quickly we set sail,
To find out what strange thing might ail
The keepers of the deep-sea light.

The winter day broke blue and bright,
With glancing sun and glancing spray,
While o'er the swell our boat made way,
As gallant as a gull in flight.

But as we neared the lonely Isle,
And looked up at the naked height,
And saw the lighthouse towering white,
With blinded lantern, that all night
Had never shot a spark
Of comfort through the dark,
So ghostly in the cold sunlight
It seemed, that we were struck the while
With wonder all too dread for words.

And as into the tiny creek
We stole beneath the hanging crag,
We saw three queer, black, ugly birds—
Too big, by far, in my belief,
For guillemot or shag—
Like seamen sitting bolt-upright
Upon a half-tide reef;
But, as we neared, they plunged from sight,
Without a sound, or spurt of white.
And still too mazed to speak,
We landed; and made fast the boat;
And climbed the track in single file,
Each wishing he were safe afloat,
On any sea, however far,
So be it far from Flannan Isle:
And still we seemed to climb, and climb,
As though we'd lost all count of time,
And so must climb for evermore.
Yet all too soon we reached the door—
The black, sun-blistered lighthouse door,
That gaped for us ajar.

As, on the threshold, for a spell,
We paused, we seemed to breathe the smell
Of limewash and of tar,
Familiar as our daily breath,
As though 'twere some strange scent of death :
And so, yet wondering, side by side,
We stood a moment, still tongue-tied :
And each with black foreboding eyed
The door, ere we should fling it wide,
To leave the sunlight for the gloom :
Till, plucking courage up, at last,
Hard on each other's heels we passed,
Into the living-room.

Yet as we crowded through the door,
We only saw a table, spread
For dinner, meat and cheese and bread;
But, all untouched; and no one there :
As though, when they sat down to eat,
Ere they could even taste,
Alarm had come; and they in haste
Had risen and left the bread and meat :
For at the table-head a chair
Lay tumbled on the floor.
We listened; but we only heard
The feeble cheeping of a bird
That starved upon its perch :
And, listening still, without a word
We set about our hopeless search.

We hunted high, we hunted low;
And soon ransacked the empty house;
Then o'er the Island, to and fro,
We ranged, to listen and to look
In every cranny, cleft or nook
That might have hid a bird or mouse.
But though we searched from shore to shore,
We found no sign in any place :
And soon again stood face to face
Before the gaping door :

And stole into the room once more
As frightened children steal.

Ay : though we hunted high and low,
And hunted everywhere,
Of the three men's fate we found no trace
Of any kind in any place,
But a door ajar, and an untouched meal,
And an overtoppled chair.

And so we listened in the gloom
Of that forsaken living-room—
A chill clutch on our breath—
We thought how ill-chance came to all
Who kept the Flannan Light :
And how the rock had been the death
Of many a likely lad :
How six had come to a sudden end,
And three had gone stark mad :

And one whom we'd all known as friend
Had leapt from the lantern one still night,
And fallen dead by the lighthouse wall :
And long we thought
On the three we sought,
And of what might yet befall.

Like curs a glance has brought to heel,
We listened, flinching there :
And looked, and looked, on the untouched meal,
And the overtoppled chair.

We seemed to stand for an endless while,
Though still no word was said,
Three men alive on Flannan Isle,
Who thought on three men dead.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON.

FORTY SINGING SEAMEN

" In our lands be Beeres and Lyons of dyvers colours as ye redd, grene, black, and white. And in our land be also unicornes and these Unicornes slee many Lyons. . . . Also there dare no man make a lye in our lande, for if he dyde he sholde incontynent be sleyn."—*Mediæval Epistle of Pope Prester John.*

I

Across the seas of Wonderland to Mogadore we plodded,
Forty singing seamen in an old black barque,
And we landed in the twilight where a Polyphemus nodded
With his battered moon-eye winking red and yellow through the dark!
For his eye was growing mellow,
Rich and ripe and red and yellow,
As was time, since old Ulysses made him bellow in the dark!
Cho.—Since Ulysses bunged his eye up with a pine-torch in the dark!

II

Were they mountains in the gloaming or the giant's ugly shoulders
Just beneath the rolling eyeball, with its bleared and vinous glow,
Red and yellow o'er the purple of the pines among the boulders
And the shaggy horror brooding on the sullen slopes below,
Were they pines among the boulders
Or the hair upon his shoulders?
We were only simple seamen, so of course we didn't know.
Cho.—We were simple singing seamen, so of course we couldn't know.

III

But we crossed a plain of poppies, and we came upon a fountain
Not of water, but of jewels, like a spray of leaping fire;
And behind it, in an emerald glade, beneath a golden mountain
There stood a crystal palace, for a sailor to admire;
For a troop of ghosts came round us,
Which with leaves of bay they crowned us,
Then with grog they well-nigh drowned us, to the depth of our desire!
Cho.—And 'twas very friendly of them, as a sailor can admire!

IV

There was music all about us, we were growing quite forgetful,
We were only singing seamen from the dirt of London-town,
Though the nectar that we swallowed seemed to vanish half regretful
As if we wasn't good enough to take such vittles down,
When we saw a sudden figure,
Tall and black as any nigger,
Like the devil—only bigger—drawing near us with a frown!
Cho.—Like the devil—but much bigger—and he wore a golden crown!

V

And "What's all this?" he growls at us! With dignity we chaunted,
"Forty singing seamen, sir, as won't be put upon!"
"What? Englishmen?" he cries. "Well, if ye don't mind being haunted,
Faith, you're welcome to my palace; I'm the famous Prester John!

Will ye walk into my palace
I don't bear 'ee any malice!
One and all ye shall be welcome in the halls of Prester John!"
Cho.—So we walked into the palace and the halls of Prester John!

VI

Now the door was one great diamond and the hall a hollow ruby—
Big as Beachy Head, my lads, nay, bigger by a half!
And I sees the mate wi' mouth agape, a-staring like a booby,
And the skipper close behind him, with his tongue out like a calf!
Now the way to take it rightly
Was to walk along politely
Just as if you didn't notice—so I couldn't help but laugh!
Cho.—For they both forgot their manners and the crew was bound to laugh!

VII

But he took us through his palace, and, my lads, as I'm a sinner,
We walked into an opal like a sunset-coloured cloud—
"My dining-room," he says, and, quick as light we saw a dinner
Spread before us by the fingers of a hidden fairy crowd;
And the skipper, swaying gently
After dinner, murmurs faintly,
"I looks to-wards you, Prester John, you've done us very proud!"
Cho.—And we drank his health with honours, for he *done* us *very* proud!

VIII

Then he walks us to his garden, where we sees a feathered demon
Very splendid and important on a sort of spicy tree!
"That's the Phœnix," whispers Prester, "which all eddicated seamen
Knows the only one existent, and *he's* waiting for to flee!
When his hundred years expire
Then he'll set hisself a-fire
And another from his ashes rise most beautiful to see!"
Cho.—With wings of rose and emerald most beautiful to see!

IX

Then he says, "In yonder forest there's a little silver river,
And whosoever drinks of it, his youth shall never die!
The centuries go by, but Prester John endures for ever
With his music in the mountains and his magic on the sky!
While *your* hearts are growing colder,
While your world is growing older,
There's a magic in the distance, where the sea-line meets the sky."
Cho.—It shall call to singing seamen till the fount o' song is dry!

X

So we thought we'd up and seek it, but that forest fair defied us,—
First a crimson leopard laughs at us most horrible to see,
Then a sea-green lion came and sniffed and licked his chops and eyed us,
While a red and yellow unicorn was dancing round a tree!

We was trying to look thinner,
Which was hard, because our dinner
Must ha' made us very tempting to a cat o' high degree!
Cho.—Must ha' made us very tempting to the whole menargeree!

XI

So we scuttled from that forest and across the poppy-meadows
Where the awful shaggy horror brooded o'er us in the dark!
And we pushes out from shore again a-jumping at our shadows
And pulls away most joyful to the old black barque!
And home again we plodded
While the Polyphemus nodded
With his battered moon-eye winking red and yellow through the dark.
Cho.—Oh, the moon above the mountains, red and yellow through the dark!

XII

Across the seas of Wonderland to London-town we blundered,
Forty singing seamen as was puzzled for to know
If the visions that we saw was caused by—here again we pondered—
A tipple in a vision forty thousand years ago.
Could the grog we *dreamt* we swallowed
Make us *dream* of all that followed?
We were only simple seamen, so of course we didn't know!
Cho.—We were simple singing seamen, so of course we could not know!

ALFRED NOYES.

CHRISTMAS AT SEA

THE sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce could stand,
The wind was a nor'wester, blowing squally off the sea;
And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lee.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day;
But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.
We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.

All day we tack'd and tack'd between the South Head and the North;
All day we haul'd the frozen sheets, and got no further forth;
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,
For very life and nature we tack'd from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-race roared;
But every tack we made we brought the North Head close aboard;
So's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers running high,
And the coastguard in his garden, with his glass against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam;
The good red fires were burning bright in every 'longshore home;

The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volley'd out;
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty jovial cheer;
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days in the year)
This day of our adversity was blessèd Christmas morn,
And the house above the coastguard's was the house where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces there,
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair;
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely elves
Go dancing round the china plates that stand upon the shelves!

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was of me,
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went to sea;
And O the wicked fool I seem'd, in every kind of way,
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessèd Christmas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.
"All hands to loose topgallant sails!" I heard the captain call.
"By the Lord, she'll never stand it," our first mate Jackson cried.
. . . "It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson," he replied.

She stagger'd to her bearings, but the sails were new and good,
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though she understood.

As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,
We clear'd the weary headland, and passed below the light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on board but me,
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea;
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the cold,
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were growing old.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

I

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away:
"Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!"
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: "'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?"

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.

I should count myself the coward if I left them, my
Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of
Spain."

III

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that
day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer
heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from
the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not
left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the
Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and
to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard
came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather
bow.
" Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again: " We be all good English
men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the
devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet."

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

VII

And while now the great San Philip hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought herself and went
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;

And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

X

For he said " Fight on! fight on! "
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said " Fight on! fight on! "

XI

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,

And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay around us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
" We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!"

XII

And the gunner said " Ay, ay," but the seamen made reply:
" We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
"I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags,

And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-
shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the
island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

LORD TENNYSON.

HERVÉ RIEL

I

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-
two,
Did the English fight the French,—woe to France!
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through
the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks
pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to Saint Malo on the
Rance,
With the English fleet in view.

II

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in
full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship,
Damfreville;
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all;
And they signalled to the place
"Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbour, take us quick—
or, quicker still,
Here's the English can and will!"

III

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt
on board;
"Why, what hope or chance have ships like these
to pass?" laughed they:

" Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred and scored,
Shall the 'Formidable' here with her twelve and eighty guns
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,
And with flow at full beside?
Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay! "

IV

Then was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:
" Here's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow
All that's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?
Better run the ships aground! "
(Ended Damfreville his speech.)
" Not a minute more to wait!
Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

V

" Give the word! " But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard;
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these
—A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second, third?
No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!

But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

VI

And "What mockery or malice have we here?" cried Hervé Riel:
"Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell
'Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river disembogues?
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's for?
Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.
Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me there's a way!
Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this 'Formidable' clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well,
Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound;
And if one ship misbehave,
—Keel so much as grate the ground,
Why, I've nothing but my life,—here's my head!" cries Hervé Riel.

VII

Not a minute more to wait.
"Steer us in, then, small and great!

Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron ! "
cried its chief.
Captains, give the sailor place !
He is Admiral, in brief.
Still the north-wind, by God's grace !
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage, as its inch of way were the wide
sea's profound !
See, safe through shoal and rock,
How they follow in a flock,
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates
the ground,
Not a spar that comes to grief !
The peril, see, is past.
All are harboured to the last,
And just as Hervé Riel hollas " Anchor ! "—sure as
fate,
Up the English come—too late !

VIII

So, the storm subsides to calm :
They see the green trees wave
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanched with balm.
" Just our rapture to enhance,
Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth and glare askance
As they cannonade away !
'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the
Rance ! "
How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's coun-
tenance !
Out burst all with one accord,
" This is Paradise for Hell !
Let France, let France's King
Thank the man that did the thing ! "
What a shout, and all one word,
" Hervé Riel ! "

As he stepped in front once more,
  Not a sympton of surprise
  In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

IX

Then said Damfreville, " My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
  Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips :
You have saved the king his ships,
  You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse !
Demand whate'er you will,
France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have ! or my name's not Damfreville."

X

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue :
" Since I needs must say my say,
  Since on board the duty's done,
And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it but a run?
Since 'tis ask and have, I may—
  Since the others go ashore—
Come ! A good whole holiday !
  Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle Aurore ! "
That he asked and that he got,—nothing more.

XI

Name and deed alike are lost :
Not a pillar nor a post
  In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;
Not a head in white and black
On a single fishing-smack,

In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack
All that France saved from the fight whence England bore the bell.
Go to Paris: rank on rank
Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre, face and flank!
You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
Save the squadron, honour France, love thy wife the Belle Aurore!

ROBERT BROWNING.

TO AUTUMN

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'erbrimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep

Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too—
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

JOHN KEATS.

THE RAVEN

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
Only this, and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—

For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,
"'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—
This it is, and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;—
Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore!"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"
Merely this, and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
" Surely," said I, " surely that is something at my window lattice :
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore ;—
'Tis the wind, and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of yore ;
Not the least obeisance made he ; not a minute stopped or stayed he ;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore.
" Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, " art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore ! "
Quoth the Raven, " Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore ;

For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door—
With such name as " Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered, " Other friends have flown before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said, " Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
" Doubtless," said I, " what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of ' Never—nevermore.' "

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;
Then upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—

What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous
bird of yore
Meant in croaking " Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable
expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my
bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at
ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight
gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight
gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then methought the air grew denser, perfumed
from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the
tufted floor.
" Wretch," I cried, " thy God hath lent thee—by
these angels He hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe, from thy memories
of Lenore!
Quaff, oh, quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this
lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, " Nevermore."

" Prophet!" said I, " thing of evil!—prophet still,
if bird or devil!—
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed
thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land
enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I
implore—
Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me,
I implore!"
Quoth the Raven, " Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil—prophet still,
if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God
we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the
distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels
name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels
name Lenore."
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign in parting, bird or fiend,"
I shrieked, upstarting—
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's
Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy
soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust
above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form
from off my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still
is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber
door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's
that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his
shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating
on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

THE SANDS OF DEE

"O MARY, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee;"
The western wind was wild and dank with foam,
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see.
The rolling mist came down and hid the land:
And never home came she.

"Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress of golden hair,
A drownèd maiden's hair
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights,
Told, when the man was no more than a voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds.
For on their march to westward, Bedivere,
Who slowly paced among the slumbering host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the King:

" I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His fields,
But in His ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.
O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would,
Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and dim,
And have not power to see it as it is:
Perchance, because we see not to the close;—
For I, being simple, thought to work His will,
And have but stricken with the sword in vain;
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.
My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death:
Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall not die."

Before that last weird battle in the west
There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain kill'd
In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown
Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
Went shrilling " Hollow, hollow all delight!
Hail, king! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.
And I am blown along a wandering wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight."
And fainter onward, like wild birds that change
Their season in the night and wail their way
From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream
Shrill'd; but in going mingled with dim cries
Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child with wail
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and call'd,
" Who spake? A dream. O light upon the wind,
Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these dim cries

Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild
Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake:
"O me, my King, let pass whatever will,
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;
But in their stead thy name and glory cling
To all high places like a golden cloud
For ever: but as yet thou shalt not pass.
Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise—
I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
And with him many of thy people, and knights
Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.
Right well in heart they know thee for the King.
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Far other is this battle in the west
Whereto we move, than when we strove in youth,
And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome,
Or thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,
And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom is mine
To war against my people and my knights.
The king who fights his people fights himself.
And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
Thro' this blind haze, which ever since I saw
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the world."

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by league,
Back to the sunset bound of Lyonnesse—
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,

And the long mountains ended in a coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no more,
And he that fled no further fly the King;
And there, that day when the great light of heaven
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
A deathwhite mist slept over sand and sea:
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear; and ev'n on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought,
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in single fights,
And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battleaxes on shatter'd helms, and shrieks
After the Christ, of those who falling down
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the mist;
And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, labouring of the lungs
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that shore,
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous day

Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
A bitter wind, clear from the North, and blew
The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field
Of battle: but no man was moving there;
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:

"Hearest thou this great voice that shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we move,
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho' they had not died for me?—
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall'n
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King.
Behold, I seem but King among the dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: "My King,
King everywhere! and so the dead have kings,
There also will I worship thee as King.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that brought
The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of thine house."

Then spake the King: "My house hath been my doom.
But call not thou this traitor of my house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.

My house are rather they who sware my vows,
Yea, even while they brake them, own'd me King.
And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
When all the purport of my throne hath fail'd,
That quick or dead thou holdest me for King.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this the King
Made at the man: then Modred smote his liege
Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonnesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land:
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more; but let what will be, be.
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.

Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known :
But now delay not : take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere :
Watch what thou seëst, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :
" It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm—
A little thing may harm a wounded man;
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,

That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fëalty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath

And rumours of a doubt? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying King,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found not words;
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold: and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge."
So to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the daïs-throne—were parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done

May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seëst—if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)—
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had past for evermore,
The stillness of the dead world's winter dawn
Amazed him, and he groan'd, "The King is gone."
And therewithal came on him the weird rhyme,
"From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly clomb
The last hard footstep of that iron crag;

Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet, and cried,
" He passes to be King among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but—if he come no more—
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black boat,
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with living light,
They stood before his throne in silence, friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need? "

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb
Ev'n to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

LORD TENNYSON.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

Part II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot :
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two :
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
And music, went to Camelot :
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed ;
" I am half-sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A redcross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

LORD TENNYSON.

TO A SKYLARK

HAIL to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-wingèd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass:

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not :
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught ;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear ;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

TO A SKYLARK

ETHEREAL minstrel ! pilgrim of the sky !
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound ?
Or while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground ?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still !

To the last point of vision, and beyond
Mount, daring warbler !—that love-prompted strain
—'Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond—
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain :
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege ! to sing
All independent of the leafy Spring.

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine,
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam—
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

PRELUDE TO PART FIRST

OVER his keys the musing organist,
Beginning doubtfully and far away,
First lets his fingers wander as they list,
And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay:
Then, as the touch of his loved instrument
Gives hope and fervour, nearer draws his theme,
First guessed by faint auroral flushes sent
Along the wavering vista of his dream.

Not only around our infancy
Doth heaven with all its splendours lie;
Daily with souls that cringe and plot,
We Sinais climb and know it not.

Over our manhood bend the skies;
Against our fallen and traitor lives
The great winds utter prophecies;
With our faint hearts the mountain strives;
Its arms outstretched, the druid wood
Waits with its *benedicite;*
And to our age's drowsy blood
Still shouts the inspiring sea.

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;
The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,
We bargain for the graves we lie in;
At the devil's booth are all things sold,
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;

For a cap and bells our lives we pay;
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking;
No price is set on the lavish summer;
June may be had by the poorest comer.

And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays:
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf nor a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,
And whatever of life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God wills it;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;

We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing;
The breeze comes whispering in our ear,
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by;
And if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack;
We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing—
And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his lusty crowing!

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how;
Everything is happy now,
Everything is upward striving;
'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true
As for grass to be green or skies to be blue—
'Tis the natural way of living:
Who knows whither the clouds have fled?
In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake;
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;
The soul partakes of the season's youth,
And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.
What wonder if Sir Launfal now
Remembered the keeping of his vow?

Part First.—I

"My golden spurs now bring to me,
And bring to me my richest mail,
For to-morrow I go over land and sea
In search of the Holy Grail:
Shall never a bed for me be spread,
Nor shall a pillow be under my head,

Till I begin my vow to keep;
Here on the rushes will I sleep,
And perchance there may come a vision true
Ere day create the world anew."
  Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim,
  Slumber fell like a cloud on him,
And into his soul the vision flew.

II

The crows flapped over by twos and threes,
In the pool drowsed the cattle up to their knees,
  The little birds sang as if it were
  The one day of summer in all the year,
And the very leaves seemed to sing on the trees:
The castle alone in the landscape lay
Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray;
'Twas the proudest hall in the North Countree,
And never its gates might opened be,
  Save to lord or lady of high degree.

  Summer besieged it on every side,
But the churlish stone her assaults defied;
She could not scale the chilly wall,
Though around it for leagues her pavilions tall
Stretched left and right,
Over the hills and out of sight;
  Green and broad was every tent,
  And out of each a murmur went
Till the breeze fell off at night.

III

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,
And through the dark arch a charger sprang,
Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden knight,
In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright
It seemed the dark castle had gathered all
Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over its wall
  In his siege of three hundred summers long.
And, binding them all in one blazing sheaf,
  Had cast them forth; so, young and strong,

And lightsome as a locust-leaf,
Sir Launfal flashed forth in his unscarred mail,
To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

IV

It was morning on hill and stream and tree,
  And morning in the young knight's heart;
Only the castle moodily
Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free
  And gloomed by itself apart;
The season brimmed all other things up
Full as the rain fills the pitcher-plant's cup.

V

As Sir Launfal made morn through the darksome gate,
  He was 'ware of a leper, crouched by the same,
Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate;
  And a loathing over Sir Launfal came;
The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,
  The flesh 'neath his armour 'gan shrink and crawl,
And midway its leap his heart stood still
  Like a frozen waterfall;
For this man, so foul and bent of stature,
Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,
And seemed the one blot on the summer morn,—
So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

VI

The leper raised not the gold from the dust:
"Better to me the poor man's crust,
Better the blessing of the poor,
Though I turn me empty from his door;
That is no true alms which the hand can hold;
He gives nothing but worthless gold
  Who gives from a sense of duty;
But he who gives a slender mite,
And gives to that which is out of sight,
  That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty
Which runs through all and doth all unite,—

The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms,
The heart outstretches its eager palms,
For a god goes with it and makes it store
To the soul that was starving in darkness before."

Prelude to Part Second

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,
From the snow five thousand summers old;
On open wold and hill-top bleak
It had gathered all the cold,
And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek;
It carried a shiver everywhere
From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare.
The little brook heard it and built a roof
'Neath which he could house him, winter-proof;
All night by the white stars' frosty gleams
He groined his arches and matched his beams;
Slender and clear were his crystal spars
As the lashes of light that trim the stars;
He sculptured every summer delight
In his halls and chambers out of sight;
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt
Down through a frost-leaved forest-crypt,
Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees
Bending to counterfeit a breeze;
Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew
But silvery mosses that downward grew;
Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief
With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf;
Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear
For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here
He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops
And hung them thickly with diamond drops,
That crystalled the beams of moon and sun,
And made a star of every one.
No mortal builder's most rare device
Could match this winter-palace of ice;
'Twas as if every image that mirrored lay
In his depths serene through the summer day,

Each fleeting shadow of earth and sky,
Lest the happy model should be lost,
Had been mimicked in fairy masonry
By the elfin builders of the frost.

Within the hall are song and laughter,
The cheeks of Christmas glow red and jolly,
And sprouting is every corbel and rafter
With lightsome green of ivy and holly;
Through the deep gulf of the chimney wide
Wallows the Yule-log's roaring tide;
The broad flame-pennons droop and flap
And belly and tug as a flag in the wind;
Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,
Hunted to death in its galleries blind;
And swift little troops of silent sparks,
Now pausing, now scattering away as in fear,
Go threading the soot-forest's tangled darks,
Like herds of startled deer.

But the wind without was eager and sharp;
Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,
And rattles and wrings
The icy strings,
Singing, in dreary monotone,
A Christmas carol of its own,
Whose burden still, as he might guess,
Was, "Shelterless, shelterless, shelterless!"
The voice of the seneschal flared like a torch
As he shouted the wanderer away from the porch,
And he sat in the gateway and saw all night
The great hall-fire, so cheery and bold,
Through the window-slits of the castle old,
Build out its piers of ruddy light
Against the drift of the cold.

Part Second.—I

There was never a leaf on bush or tree,
The bare boughs rattled shudderingly;

The river was numb and could not speak,
For the weaver Winter its shroud had spun;
A single crow on the tree-top bleak
From his shining feathers shed off the cold sun.
Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,
As if her veins were sapless and old,
And she rose up decrepitly
For a last dim look at earth and sea.

II

Sir Launfal turned from his own hard gate,
For another heir in his earldom sate;
An old, bent man, worn out and frail,
He came back from seeking the Holy Grail;
Little he recked of his earldom's loss,
No more on his surcoat was blazoned the Cross,
But deep in his soul the sign he wore,
The badge of the suffering and the poor.

III

Sir Launfal's raiment, thin and spare,
Was idle mail 'gainst the barbèd air,
For it was just at the Christmas time;
So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,
And sought for a shelter from cold and snow
In the light and warmth of long ago;
He sees the snake-like caravan crawl
O'er the edge of the desert, black and small,
Then nearer and nearer, till, one by one,
He can count the camels in the sun,
As over the red-hot sands they pass
To where, in its slender necklace of grass,
The little spring laughed and leapt in the shade,
And with its own self like an infant played,
And waved its signal of palms.

IV

"For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms!"—
The happy camels may reach the spring,
But Sir Launfal sees only the gruesome thing,

The leper, lank as the rain-blanched bone,
That cowers beside him, a thing as lone
And white as the ice-isles of Northern seas
In the desolate horror of his disease.

V

And Sir Launfal said, " I behold in thee
An image of Him who died on the tree;
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,—
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,—
And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in the hands and feet and side;
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;
Behold, through him, I give to Thee! "

VI

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes
And looked at Sir Launfal, and straightway he
Remembered in what a haughtier guise
He had flung an alm to leprosie,
When he girt his young life up in gilded mail
And set forth in search of the Holy Grail.
The heart within him was ashes and dust;
He parted in twain his single crust,
He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,
And gave the leper to eat and drink;
'Twas a mouldy crust of coarse brown bread,
'Twas water out of a wooden bowl,—
Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper fed,
And 'twas red wine he drank with his thirsty soul.

VII

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,
A light shone round about the place;
The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified,
Shining and tall and fair and straight
As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate,—
Himself the Gate whereby men can
Enter the temple of God in Man.

VIII

His words were shed softer than leaves from the pine,
And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on the brine,
Which mingle their softness and quiet in one
With the shaggy unrest they float down upon:
And the voice that was calmer than silence said,
"Lo, it is I, be not afraid!
In many climes, without avail,
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;
Behold, it is here,—this cup which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now:
This crust is my body broken for thee,
This water His blood that died on the tree;
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need;
Not what we give, but what we share,—
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,—
Himself, his hungering neighbour, and me."

IX

Sir Launfal awoke, as from a swound;—
"The Grail in my castle here is found!
Hang my idle armour on the wall,
Let it be the spider's banquet-hall;
He must be fenced with stronger mail
Who would seek and find the Holy Grail."

X

The castle gate stands open now,
And the wanderer is welcome to the hall
As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough;
No longer scowl the turrets tall,
The Summer's long siege at last is o'er;
When the first poor outcast went in at the door,
She entered with him in disguise,
And mastered the fortress by surprise;

There is no spot she loves so well on ground,
She lingers and smiles there the whole year round;
The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land
Has hall and bower at his command;
And there 's no poor man in the North Countree
But is lord of the earldom as much as he.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS

KING FRANCIS was a hearty king, and lov'd a royal sport,
And one day, as his lions fought, sat looking on the court;
The nobles fill'd the benches, and the ladies in their pride,
And 'mongst them sat the Count de Lorge, with one for whom he sigh'd:
And truly 'twas a gallant thing to see that crowning show,
Valour and love, and a king above, and the royal beasts below.

Ramp'd and roar'd the lions, with horrid laughing jaws;
They bit, they glared, gave blows like beams, a wind went with their paws;
With wallowing might and stifled roar they roll'd on one another,
Till all the pit with sand and mane was in a thunderous smother;
The bloody foam above the bars came whisking through the air;
Said Francis then, "Faith, gentlemen, we're better here than there."

De Lorge's love o'erheard the King, a beauteous lively dame
With smiling lips and sharp bright eyes, which always seem'd the same;

She thought, The Count my lover is brave as brave can be;
He surely would do wondrous things to show his love of me;
King, ladies, lovers, all look on; the occasion is divine;
I'll drop my glove to prove his love; great glory will be mine.

She dropp'd her glove to prove his love, then look'd at him and smiled;
He bow'd, and in a moment leap'd among the lions wild;
The leap was quick, return was quick, he has regain'd his place,
Then threw the glove, but not with love, right in the lady's face.
"By God!" said Francis, "rightly done!" and he rose from where he sat;
"No love," quoth he, "but vanity, sets love a task like that."

LEIGH HUNT.

THE GLOVE

(PETER RONSARD *loquitur*.)

"HEIGHO," yawned one day King Francis,
Distance all value enhances!
When a man's busy, why, leisure
Strikes him as wonderful pleasure,—
'Faith, and at leisure once is he?
Straightway he wants to be busy.
Here we've got peace; and aghast I'm
Caught thinking war the true pastime!
Is there a reason in metre?
Give us your speech, master Peter!"
I who, if mortal dare say so,
Ne'er am at loss with my Naso,

" Sire," I replied, " joys prove cloudlets :
Men are the merest Ixions "—
Here the King whistled aloud, " Let's
" . . . Heigho . . . go look at our lions ! "
Such are the sorrowful chances
If you talk fine to King Francis.

And so, to the courtyard proceeding,
Our company, Francis was leading,
Increased by new followers tenfold
Before he arrived at the penfold;
Lords, ladies, like clouds which bedizen
At sunset the western horizon.
And Sir De Lorge pressed 'mid the foremost
With the dame he professed to adore most
Oh, what a face ! One by fits eyed
Her, and the horrible pitside;
For the penfold surrounded a hollow
Which led where the eye scarce dared follow,
And shelved to the chamber secluded
Where Bluebeard, the great lion, brooded.
The king hailed his keeper, an Arab
As glossy and black as a scarab,
And bade him make sport and at once stir
Up and out of his den the old monster.
They opened a hole in the wirework
Across it, and dropped there a firework,
And fled; one's heart's beating redoubled;
A pause, while the pit's mouth was troubled,
The blackness and silence so utter,
By the firework's slow sparkling and sputter;
Then earth in a sudden contortion
Gave out to our gaze her abortion !
Such a brute ! Were I friend Clement Marot
(Whose experience of nature's but narrow,
And whose faculties move in no small mist
When he versifies David the Psalmist)
I should study that brute to describe you
Illum Juda Leonem de Tribu !

One's whole blood grew curdling and creepy
To see the black mane, vast and heapy,
The tail in the air stiff and straining,
The wide eyes, nor waxing nor waning,
As over the barrier which bounded
His platform, and us who surrounded
The barrier, they reached and they rested
On the space that might stand him in best stead:
For who knew, he thought, what the amazement,
The eruption of clatter and blaze meant,
And if, in this minute of wonder,
No outlet, 'mid lightning and thunder,
Lay broad, and, his shackles all shivered,
The lion at last was delivered?
Ay, that was the open sky o'erhead!
And you saw by the flash on his forehead,
By the hope in those eyes wide and steady,
He was leagues in the desert already,
Driving the flocks up the mountain,
Or catlike couched hard by the fountain
To waylay the date-gathering negress:
So guarded he entrance or egress.
"How he stands!" quoth the King: "we may well swear,
(No novice, we've won our spurs elsewhere,
And so can afford the confession)
We exercise wholesome discretion
In keeping aloof from his threshold;
Once hold you, those jaws want no fresh hold,
Their first would too pleasantly purloin
The visitor's brisket or sirloin;
But who's he would prove so fool-hardy?
Not the best man of Marignan, pardie?"

The sentence no sooner was uttered,
Then over the rails a glove fluttered,
Fell close to the lion, and rested:
The dame 'twas, who flung it and jested
With life so, De Lorge had been wooing
For months past; he sat there pursuing

His suit, weighing out with nonchalance
Fine speeches like gold from a balance.

Sound the trumpet, no true knight's a tarrier!
De Lorge made one leap at the barrier,
Walked straight to the glove,—while the lion
Ne'er moved, kept his far-reaching eye on
The palm-tree-edged desert-spring's sapphire,
And the musky oiled skin of the Kaffir,—
Picked it up, and as calmly retreated,
Leaped back where the lady was seated,
And full in the face of its owner
Flung the glove—

" Your heart's queen, you dethrone her?
So should I "—cried the King—" 'twas mere vanity,
Not love, set that task to humanity! "
Lords and ladies alike turned with loathing
From such a proved wolf in sheep's clothing.

Not so, I; for I caught an expression
In her brow's undisturbed self-possession
Amid the Court's scoffing and merriment,—
As if from no pleasing experiment
She rose, yet of pain not much heedful
So long as the process was needful—
As if she had tried in a crucible,
To what " speeches like gold " were reducible,
And, finding the finest prove copper,
Felt the smoke in her face was but proper;
To know what she had *not* to trust to,
Was worth all the ashes, and dust too.
She went out 'mid hooting and laughter;
Clement Marot stayed; I followed after,
And asked, as a grace, what it all meant—
If she wished not the rash deed's recalment?
" For I "—so I spoke—" am a Poet:
Human nature,—behoves that I know it! "

She told me, " Too long had I heard
Of the deed proved alone by the word:

For my love,—what De Lorge would not dare!
With my scorn—what De Lorge could compare!
And the endless descriptions of death
He would brave when my lip formed a breath,
I must reckon as braved, or, of course,
Doubt his word—and moreover, perforce,
For such gifts as no lady could spurn,
Must offer my love in return.
When I looked on your lion, it brought
All the dangers at once to my thought,
Encountered by all sorts of men,
Before he was lodged in his den,—
From the poor slave whose club or bare hands
Dug the trap, set the snare on the sands,
With no King and no Court to applaud,
By no shame, should he shrink, overawed,
Yet to capture the creature made shift,
That his rude boys might laugh at the gift,
To the page who last leaped o'er the fence
Of the pit, on no greater pretence
Than to get back the bonnet he dropped,
Lest his pay for a week should be stopped—
So, wiser I judged it to make
One trial what 'death for my sake'
Really meant, while the power was yet mine,
Than to wait until time should define
Such a phrase not so simply as I,
Who took it to mean just 'to die.'
The blow a glove gives is but weak—
Does the mark yet discolour my cheek?
But when the heart suffers a blow,
Will the pain pass so soon, do you know?"

I looked, as away she was sweeping,
And saw a youth eagerly keeping
As close as he dared to the doorway:
No doubt that a noble should more weigh
His life than befits a plebeian;
And yet, had our brute been Nemean—

(I judge by a certain calm fervor
The youth stepped with, forward to serve her)
—He'd have scarce thought you did him the worst turn
If you whispered "Friend, what you'd get, first earn!"
And when, shortly after, she carried
Her shame from the Court, and they married,
To that marriage some happiness, maugre
The voice of the Court, I dared augur.

ROBERT BROWNING.

THE HIGHWAYMAN

Part One

I

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding—
Riding—riding—
The highwayman came riding up to the old inn-door.

II

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up to the thigh!
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,
His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

III

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair!

IV

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
Where Tim the ostler listened; his face was white and peaked;
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's red-lipped daughter,
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say—

V

"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way."

VI

He rose upright in the stirrups; he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair i' the casement! His face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
(Oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the west.

Part Two

I

He did not come in the dawning; he did not come at noon;
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon,
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,
A red-coat troop came marching—
Marching—marching—
King George's men came marching up to the old inn-door.

II

They said no word to the landlord, they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed;
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!
There was death at every window;
And hell at one dark window;
For Bess could see, through the casement, the road that *he* would ride.

III

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest;
They had bound a musket beside her, with the barrel beneath her breast!
"Now keep good watch!" and they kissed her. She heard the dead man say—
Look for me by moonlight;
Watch for me by moonlight;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!

IV

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

V

The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more for the rest!
Up, she stood up to attention, with the barrel beneath her breast,
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain.

VI

Tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing clear;
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding—
Riding—riding—
The red-coats looked to their priming! She stood up, straight and still!

VII

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! *Tlot-tlot,* in the echoing night,
Nearer he came and nearer! Her face was like a light!

Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him—with her death.

VIII

He turned; he spurred to the westward; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own red blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, and slowly blanched to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

IX

Back he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him, and his rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon, wine-red was his velvet coat,
When they shot him down on the highway,
Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with the bunch of lace at his throat.

. . . . . .

X

And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,

When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
A highwayman comes riding—
Riding—riding—
A highwayman comes riding up to the old inn-door.

XI

Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard;
And he taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred;
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair!

ALFRED NOYES.

THE PATRIOT

AN OLD STORY

I

IT was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad.
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day!

II

The air broke into a mist with bells,
The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels—
But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
They had answered, "And afterward, what else?"

III

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun,
To give it my loving friends to keep.
Nought man could do, have I left undone;
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

IV

There's nobody on the house-tops now—
Just a palsied few at the windows set—
For the best of the sight is, all allow,
At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

V

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind,
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

VI

Thus I entered and thus I go!
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
"Paid by the World,—what dost thou owe
Me?"—God might question; but now instead
'Tis God shall repay! I am safer so.

ROBERT BROWNING.

THE SEA-KING'S BURIAL

"My strength is failing fast,"
Said the Sea-king to his men;—
"I shall never sail the seas,
Like a conqueror again.
But while yet a drop remains
Of the Life-blood in my veins,

Raise, oh raise me from the bed;—
Put the crown upon my head;—
Put my good sword in my hand;
And so lead me to the strand,
Where my ship at anchor rides
Steadily;
If I cannot end my life
In the bloody battle-strife,
Let me die as I have lived,
On the sea."

They have raised King Balder up,
Put his crown upon his head;
They have sheathed his limbs in mail,
And the purple o'er him spread;
And amid the greeting rude
Of a gathering multitude,
Borne him slowly to the shore—
All the energy of yore
From his dim eyes flashing forth—
Old sea-lion of the North;
As he looked upon his ship
Riding free.
And on his forehead pale
Felt the cold refreshing gale,
And heard the welcome sound
Of the sea.

"Hurra! for mighty Balder!
As he lived, so will he die!
Hurra! hurra! for Balder!"
Said the crowd as he went by.
"He will perish on the wave,
Like the old Vikings brave;
And in high Valhalla's halls
Hold eternal festivals;
And drink the blood-red draught
None but heroes ever quaffed,
With Odin and the spirits
Of the free.

In the fire or in the wreck,
He will die upon the deck
And be buried like a monarch
Of the sea."

Old Balder heard their shouts
As they bore him to the beach;
And his fading eye grew bright
With the eloquence of speech,
As he heard the mighty roar
Of the people on the shore,
And the trumpets pealing round
With a bold triumphal sound,
And saw the flags afar
Of a hundred ships of war,
That were riding in the harbour
Gallantly.
And said Balder to his men—
And his pale cheek flushed again—
" I have lived, and I will die
On the sea."

They have borne him to the ship
With a slow and solemn tread;
They have placed him on the deck
With his crown upon his head,
Where he sat as on a throne;
And have left him there alone,
With his anchor ready weigh'd,
And the snowy sails display'd
To the favouring wind once more
Blowing freshly from the shore;
And have bidden him farewell
Tenderly;
Saying, " King of mighty men,
We shall meet thee yet again,
In Valhalla, with the monarchs
Of the sea."

Underneath him in the hold
They had placed the lighted brand;

And the fire was burning slow
As the vessel from the land,
Like a staghound from the slips,
Darted forth from out the ships;—
There was music in her sail
As it swell'd before the gale,
And a dashing at her prow
As it cleft the waves below,
And the good ship sped along,
Scudding free.
As on many a battle morn
In her time she had been borne,
To struggle and to conquer
On the sea.

And the King with sudden strength
Started up and paced the deck,
With his good sword for his staff,
And his robe around his neck;—
Once alone he waved his hand
To the people on the land
With a shout and joyous cry.
Once again they made reply
Till the loud, exulting cheer
Sounded faintly on his ear;
For the gale was o'er him blowing,
Fresh and free;
And ere yet an hour had pass'd,
He was driven before the blast,
And a storm was on his path
On the sea.

And still upon the deck—
While the storm about him rent,
King Balder paced about
Till his failing strength was spent.
Then he stopp'd awhile to rest—
Crossed his hands upon his breast,
And looked upward to the sky,
With a dim but dauntless eye;

And heard the tall mast creak,
And the fitful tempest speak
Shrill and fierce, to the billows
Rushing free;
And within himself, he said,
"I am coming, oh, ye dead!
To join you in Valhalla,
O'er the sea.

"So blow, ye tempests, blow,
And my spirit shall not quail;
I have fought with many a foe,
I have weathered many a gale;
And in this hour of death,
Ere I yield my fleeting breath
Ere the fire now burning slow
Shall come rushing from below,
And this worn and wasted frame
Be devoted to the flame—
I will raise my voice in triumph,
Singing free;—
To the great All-Father's home
I am driving through the foam,
I am sailing to Valhalla,
O'er the sea.

"So blow, ye stormy winds—
And ye flames, ascend on high;—
In the easy, idle bed
Let the slave and coward die!
But give me the driving keel,
Clang of shields and flashing steel;—
Or my foot on foreign ground
With my enemies around!
Happy! happy thus I yield,
On the deck or on the field,
My last breath shouting, 'On
To Victory!'
But since *this* has been denied,
They shall say that I have died

Without flinching, like a monarch
Of the sea."

And Balder spake no more,
And no sound escaped his lip;—
And he looked, yet scarcely saw
The destruction of his ship;
Nor the fleet sparks mounting high,
Nor the glare upon the sky;—
Scarcely heard the billows dash,
Nor the burning timber crash;—
Scarcely felt the scorching heat
That was gathering at his feet,
Nor the fierce flames mounting o'er him
Greedily.
But the life was in him yet,
And the courage to forget
All his pain, in his triumph
On the sea.

Once alone a cry arose,
Half of anguish, half of pride,
As he sprang upon his feet,
With the flames on every side.
"I am coming!" said the King,
"Where the swords and bucklers ring—
Where the warrior lives again
With the souls of mighty men—
Where the weary find repose,
And the red wine ever flows:
I am coming, great All-Father,
Unto thee!
Unto Odin, unto Thor,
And the strong, true hearts of yore—
I am coming to Valhalla,
O'er the sea."

Red and fierce upon the sky
Until midnight shone the glare,
And the burning ship drove on—
Like a meteor of the air.

She was driven and hurried past,
'Mid the roaring of the blast.
And of Balder, warrior-born,
Naught remained at break of morn
On the charr'd and blacken'd hull,
But some ashes, and a skull;
And still the vessel drifted
Heavily,
With a pale and hazy light
Until far into the night,
When the storm had spent its rage
On the sea.

Then the ocean ceased her strife
With the wild winds lull'd to rest,
And a full, round, placid moon
Shed a halo on her breast;
And the burning ship still lay
On the deep sea, far away;
From her ribs of solid oak,
Pouring forth the flame and smoke:
Until, burnt through all her bulk
To the water's edge, the hulk
Down a thousand fathoms founder'd
Suddenly,
With a low and sullen sound,
While the billows sang around
Sad requiems for the monarch
Of the sea.

CHARLES MACKAY.

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

ROBERT of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Apparelled in magnificent attire,
With retinue of many a knight and squire,
On St. John's eve, at vespers, proudly sat
And heard the priests chant the Magnificat.

And as he listened, o'er and o'er again
Repeated, like a burden or refrain,
He caught the words, "*Deposuit potentes*
De sede, et exaltavit humiles";
And slowly lifting up his kingly head
He to a learned clerk beside him said,
"What mean these words?" The clerk made answer meet,
"He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree."
Thereat King Robert muttered scornfully,
"'Tis well that such seditious words are sung
Only by priests and in the Latin tongue;
For unto priests and people be it known,
There is no power can push me from my throne!"
And leaning back, he yawned and fell asleep,
Lulled by the chant monotonous and deep.

When he awoke, it was already night;
The church was empty, and there was no light,
Save where the lamps, that glimmered few and faint,
Lighted a little space before some saint.
He started from his seat and gazed around,
But saw no living thing and heard no sound.
He groped towards the door, but it was locked;
He cried aloud, and listened, and then knocked,
And uttered awful threatenings and complaints,
And imprecations upon men and saints.
The sounds re-echoed from the roof and walls
As if dead priests were laughing in their stalls.

At length the sexton, hearing from without
The tumult of the knocking and the shout,
And thinking thieves were in the house of prayer,
Came with his lantern, asking, "Who is there?"
Half-choked with rage, King Robert fiercely said,
"Open: 'tis I, the King! Art thou afraid?"
The frightened sexton, muttering, with a curse,
"This is some drunken vagabond, or worse!"

Turned the great key and flung the portal wide;
A man rushed by him at a single stride,
Haggard, half-naked, without hat or cloak,
Who neither turned, nor looked at him, nor spoke,
But leaped into the blackness of the night,
And vanished like a spectre from his sight.

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Despoiled of his magnificent attire,
Bareheaded, breathless, and besprent with mire,
With sense of wrong and outrage desperate,
Strode on and thundered at the palace gate;
Rushed through the courtyard, thrusting in his rage
To right and left each seneschal and page,
And hurried up the broad and sounding stair,
His white face ghastly in the torches' glare.
From hall to hall he passed with breathless speed;
Voices and cries he heard, but did not heed,
Until at last he reached the banquet-room,
Blazing with light, and breathing with perfume.

There on the dais sat another king,
Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring,
King Robert's self in features, form, and height,
But all transfigured with angelic light!
It was an Angel; and his presence there
With a divine effulgence filled the air,
An exaltation, piercing the disguise,
Though none the hidden Angel recognize.

A moment speechless, motionless, amazed,
The throneless monarch on the Angel gazed,
Who met his look of anger and surprise
With the divine compassion of his eyes;
Then said, "Who art thou? and why com'st thou here?"
To which King Robert answered, with a sneer,
"I am the King, and come to claim my own
From an impostor, who usurps my throne!"

And suddenly, at these audacious words,
Up sprang the angry guests, and drew their swords;
The Angel answered, with unruffled brow,
"Nay, not the King, but the King's Jester, thou
Henceforth shall wear the bells and scalloped cape,
And for thy counsellor shalt lead an ape;
Thou shalt obey my servants when they call,
And wait upon my henchmen in the hall!"

Deaf to King Robert's threats and cries and prayers,
They thrust him from the hall and down the stairs;
A group of tittering pages ran before,
And as they opened wide the folding door,
His heart failed, for he heard, with strange alarms,
The boisterous laughter of the men-at-arms,
And all the vaulted chamber roar and ring
With the mock plaudits of "Long live the King!"

Next morning, waking with the day's first beam,
He said within himself, "It was a dream!"
But the straw rustled as he turned his head,
There were the cap and bells beside his bed,
Around him rose the bare, discoloured walls,
Close by, the steeds were champing in their stalls,
And in the corner, a revolting shape,
Shivering and chattering sat the wretched ape.
It was no dream; the world he loved so much
Had turned to dust and ashes at his touch!

Days came and went; and now returned again
To Sicily the old Saturnian reign;
Under the Angel's governance benign
The happy island danced with corn and wine,
And deep within the mountain's burning breast
Enceladus, the giant, was at rest.
Meanwhile King Robert yielded to his fate,
Sullen and silent and disconsolate.
Dressed in the motley garb that Jesters wear,
With look bewildered and a vacant stare,
Close shaven above the ears, as monks are shorn,
By courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn,

His only friend the ape, his only food
What others left,—he still was unsubdued.
And when the Angel met him on his way,
And half in earnest, half in jest, would say,
Sternly, though tenderly, that he might feel
The velvet scabbard held a sword of steel,
" Art thou the King? " the passion of his woe
Burst from him in resistless overflow,
And, lifting high his forehead, he would fling
The haughty answer back, " I am, I am the King ! "

Almost three years were ended; when there came
Ambassadors of great repute and name
From Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Unto King Robert, saying that Pope Urbane
By letter summoned them forthwith to come
On Holy Thursday to his city of Rome.
The Angel with great joy received his guests,
And gave them presents of embroidered vests,
And velvet mantles with rich ermine lined,
And rings and jewels of the rarest kind.
Then he departed with them o'er the sea
Into the lovely land of Italy,
Whose loveliness was more resplendent made
By the mere passing of that cavalcade,
With plumes, and cloaks, and housings, and the stir
Of jewelled bridle and of golden spur.

And lo ! among the menials, in mock state,
Upon a piebald steed, with shambling gait,
His cloak of fox-tails flapping in the wind,
The solemn ape demurely perched behind,
King Robert rode, making huge merriment
In all the country towns through which they went.

The Pope received them with great pomp and blare
Of bannered trumpets, on Saint Peter's square,
Giving his benediction and embrace,
Fervent, and full of apostolic grace.
While with congratulations and with prayers
He entertained the Angel unawares,

Robert, the Jester, bursting through the crowd,
Into their presence rushed, and cried aloud,
"I am the King! Look, and behold in me
Robert, your brother, King of Sicily!
This man, who wears my semblance to your eyes,
Is an impostor in a king's disguise.
Do you not know me? does no voice within
Answer my cry, and say we are akin?"
The Pope in silence, but with troubled mien,
Gazed at the Angel's countenance serene;
The Emperor, laughing, said, "It is strange sport
To keep a madman for thy Fool at court!"
And the poor, baffled Jester in disgrace
Was hustled back among the populace.

In solemn state the Holy Week went by,
And Easter Sunday gleamed upon the sky;
The presence of the Angel, with its light,
Before the sun rose, made the city bright,
And with new fervour filled the hearts of men,
Who felt that Christ indeed had risen again.
Even the Jester, on his bed of straw,
With haggard eyes the unwonted splendour saw;
He felt within a power unfelt before,
And, kneeling humbly on his chamber floor,
He heard the rushing garments of the Lord
Sweep through the silent air, ascending heavenward.

And now the visit ending, and once more
Valmond returning to the Danube's shore,
Homeward the Angel journeyed, and again
The land was made resplendent with his train,
Flashing along the towns of Italy
Unto Salerno, and from thence by sea.
And when once more within Palermo's wall,
And, seated on the throne in his great hall,
He heard the Angelus from convent towers,
As if the better world conversed with ours,
He beckoned to King Robert to draw nigher,
And with a gesture bade the rest retire;

And when they were alone, the Angel said,
"Art thou the King?" Then, bowing down his head,
King Robert crossed both hands upon his breast,
And meekly answered him: "Thou knowest best!
My sins as scarlet are; let me go hence,
And in some cloister's school of penitence,
Across those stones, that pave the way to heaven,
Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul be shriven!"

The Angel smiled, and from his radiant face
A holy light illumined all the place,
And through the open window, loud and clear,
They heard the monks chant in the chapel near,
Above the stir and tumult of the street:
"He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree!"
And through the chant a second melody
Rose like the throbbing of a single string:
"I am an Angel, and thou art the King!"

King Robert, who was standing near the throne,
Lifted his eyes, and lo! he was alone!
But all apparelled as in days of old,
With ermined mantle and with cloth of gold;
And when his courtiers came, they found him there
Kneeling upon the floor, absorbed in silent prayer.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

PART TWO

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

SEVEN PARTS

Part I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
" By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
" There was a ship," quoth he.
" Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest is spellbound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

" The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the line.

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he !
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

" And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong :
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold :
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen :
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around :
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound !

At length did cross an Albatross,
Through the fog it came ;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;
The helmsman steered us through !

And a good south wind sprung up behind ;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo !

And lo ! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine ;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

" God save thee, ancient Mariner !
From the fiends, that plague thee thus !—
Why look'st thou so ? "—" With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross."

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

Part II

"The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariner's hollo!

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere
Nor any drop to drink.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so,
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

A Spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

The ship-mates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

Part III

"There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The Ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

A flash of joy;

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call;
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

And horror follows. For can it be a ship that comes onward without wind or tide?

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a-flame,
The day was well nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace !)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.

Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears !
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres ?

Are those *her* ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate ?
And is that Woman all her crew ?
Is that a Death ? and are there two ?
Is Death that woman's mate ?

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun.

The Spectre-Woman and her Death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton-ship.

Her lips were red, *her* looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold :
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Like vessel, like crew !

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice ;
' The game is done ! I've won ! I've won ! '
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

The Sun's rim dips ; the stars rush out :
At one stride comes the dark ;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

No twilight within the courts of the Sun.

We listened and looked sideways up !
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip !
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white ;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

At the rising of the Moon.

One after another,

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

His ship-mates drop down dead.

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

Part IV

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a Spirit is talking to him;

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—
But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

He despiseth the creatures of the calm.

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

And envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward, and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet thers is a silent joy at their arrival.

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmèd water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes :
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire :
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam ; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty and their happiness.

O happy living things ! no tongue
Their beauty might declare :
A spring of love gushed from my heart,

He blesseth them in his heart.

And I blessed them unaware :
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The spell begins to break.

The selfsame moment I could pray ;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

Part V

" Oh sleep ! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole !
To Mary Queen the praise be given !
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew ;
And when I awoke, it rained.

My mas were wet, my throat was cold,
My ments all were dank ;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs;
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

He heareth sounds and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element.

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on;

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee :
The body and I pulled at one rope
But he said nought to me."

" I fear thee, ancient Mariner ! "
" Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest !
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest :

But not by the souls of the men, nor by dæmons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast ;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun ;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing ;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning !

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute ;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased ; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe :
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid : and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The lonesome spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean :
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound :
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare ;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

The Polar Spirit's fellow-dæmons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

' Is it he? ' quoth one, ' Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew :
Quoth he, ' The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

Part VI

FIRST VOICE

" ' But tell me, tell me ! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing? '

SECOND VOICE

' Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see ! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

FIRST VOICE

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

' But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind? '

SECOND VOICE

' The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !
Or we shall be belated :
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather :
'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high,
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter :
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away :
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse is finally expiated.

And now this spell was snapt : once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made :
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too :
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

The Angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,

And appear in their own forms of light.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand;
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

Part VII

The Hermit of the Wood.

"This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?'

Approacheth the ship with wonder.

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—
'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks looked warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared'—'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

The ship suddenly sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.

'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?'

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him and the penance of life falls on him.

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land,

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea;
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company !—

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay !

And to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone : and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn :
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

IVRY

A Song of the Huguenots

Now glory to the Lord of Hosts, from whom all glories are!
And glory to our Sovereign Liege, King Henry of Navarre!
Now let there be the merry sound of music and of dance,
Through thy corn-fields green, and sunny vines, O pleasant land of France!
And thou, Rochelle, our own Rochelle, proud city of the waters,
Again let rapture light the eyes of all thy mourning daughters.
As thou wert constant in our ills, be joyous in our joy,
For cold, and stiff, and still are they who wrought thy walls annoy.
Hurrah! Hurrah! a single field hath turned the chance of war,
Hurrah! Hurrah! for Ivry, and Henry of Navarre.

Oh! how our hearts were beating, when, at the dawn of day,
We saw the army of the League drawn out in long array;
With all its priest-led citizens, and all its rebel-peers,
And Appenzel's stout infantry, and Egmont's Flemish spears.
There rode the brood of false Lorraine, the curses of our land;
And dark Mayenne was in the midst, a truncheon in his hand:
And, as we looked on them, we thought of Seine's empurpled flood,
And good Coligny's hoary hair all dabbled with his blood;

And we cried unto the living God, who rules the fate of war,
To fight for His own holy name, and Henry of Navarre.

The King is come to marshal us, in all his armour drest,
And he has bound a snow-white plume upon his gallant crest.
He looked upon his people, and a tear was in his eye;
He looked upon the traitors, and his glance was stern and high.
Right graciously he smiled on us, as rolled from wing to wing,
Down all our line, a deafening shout, "God save our Lord the King."
"An if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full well he may,
For never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray,
Press where ye see my white plume shine, amidst the ranks of war,
And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre."

Hurrah! the foes are moving. Hark to the mingled din
Of fife, and steed, and trump, and drum, and roaring culverin.
The fiery Duke is pricking fast across Saint André's plain,
With all the hireling chivalry of Guelders and Almayne.
Now by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen of France,
Charge for the golden lilies,—upon them with the lance.
A thousand spurs are striking deep, a thousand spears in rest,
A thousand knights are pressing close behind the snow-white crest;

And in they burst, and on they rushed, while, like a guiding star,
Amidst the thickest carnage blazed the helmet of Navarre.

Now, God be praised, the day is ours. Mayenne hath turned his rein.
D'Aumale hath cried for quarter. The Flemish count is slain.
Their ranks are breaking like thin clouds before a Biscay gale;
The field is heaped with bleeding steeds, and flags, and cloven mail.
And then we thought on vengeance, and, all along our van,
"Remember Saint Bartholomew," was passed from man to man.
But out spake gentle Henry, "No Frenchman is my foe:
Down, down, with every foreigner, but let your brethren go."
Oh! was there ever such a knight, in friendship or in war,
As our Sovereign Lord, King Henry, the soldier of Navarre?

Right well fought all the Frenchmen who fought for France to-day;
And many a lordly banner God gave them for a prey.
But we of the religion have borne us best in fight;
And the good Lord of Rosny hath ta'en the cornet white.
Our own true Maximilian the cornet white hath ta'en,
The cornet white with crosses black, the flag of false Lorraine.
Up with it high; unfurl it wide; that all the host may know
How God hath humbled the proud house which wrought His Church such woe.

Then on the ground, while trumpets sound their loudest point of war,
Fling the red shreds, a footcloth meet for Henry of Navarre.

Ho! maidens of Vienna; Ho! matrons of Lucerne;
Weep, weep, and rend your hair for those who never shall return.
Ho! Philip, send, for charity, thy Mexican pistoles,
That Antwerp monks may sing a mass for thy poor spearmen's souls.
Ho! gallant nobles of the League, look that your arms be bright;
Ho! burghers of Saint Genevieve, keep watch and ward to-night.
For our God hath crushed the tyrant, our God hath raised the slave,
And mocked the counsel of the wise, and the valour of the brave;
Then glory to His holy name, from whom all glories are;
And glory to our Sovereign Lord, King Henry of Navarre.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

THE CASTAWAY

OBSCUREST night involv'd the sky,
Th' Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destin'd wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast,
With warmer wishes sent.
He lov'd them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away;
But wag'd with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted: nor his friends had fail'd
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd,
That, pitiless perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford;
And, such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
Delay'd not to bestow.
But he (they knew) nor ship, nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean, self-upheld;
And so long he, with unspent pow'r,
His destiny repell'd;
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried—Adieu!

At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in ev'ry blast,
Could catch the sound no more.
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him : but the page
  Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
  Is wet with Anson's tear.
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
  Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
  A more enduring date :
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
  No light propitious shone;
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
  We perish'd, each alone :
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulphs than he.

WILLIAM COWPER.

BORDER MARCH

I

MARCH, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale,
  Why the deil dinna ye march forward in order?
March, march, Eskdale and Liddesdale,
  All the Blue Bonnets are bound for the Border.
    Many a banner spread,
    Flutters above your head,
  Many a crest that is famous in story.
    Mount and make ready then,
    Sons of the mountain glen,
  Fight for the Queen and our old Scottish glory.

II

Come from the hills where your hirsels are grazing,
  Come from the glen of the buck and the roe;
Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing,
  Come with the buckler, the lance, and the bow.
    Trumpets are sounding,
    War-steeds are bounding,
Stand to your arms, and march in good order,
    England shall many a day
    Tell of the bloody fray,
When the Blue Bonnets came over the Border.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

PROUD MAISIE

PROUD Maisie is in the wood,
  Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
  Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,
  When shall I marry me?"—
"When six braw gentlemen
  Kirkward shall carry ye."

"Who makes the bridal bed,
  Birdie, say truly?"—
"The grey-headed sexton
  That delves the grave duly.

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
  Shall light thee steady.
The owl from the steeple sing,
  'Welcome, proud lady.'"

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

ROUNDABOUTS AND SWINGS

It was early last September nigh to Framlin'am-on-Sea,
An' 'twas Fair-day come to-morrow, an' the time was after tea,
An' I met a painted caravan adown a dusty lane,
A Pharaoh with his waggons comin' jolt an' creak an' strain;
A cheery cove an' sunburnt, bold o' eye and wrinkled up,
An' beside him on the splashboard sat a brindled tarrier pup,
An' a lurcher wise as Solomon an' lean as fiddle-strings
Was joggin' in the dust along 'is roundabouts and swings.

"Goo'-day," said 'e; "Goo'-day," said I; "an' 'ow d'you find things go,
An' what's the chance o' millions when you runs a travellin' show?"
"I find," said 'e, "things very much as 'ow I've always found,
For mostly they goes up and down or else goes round and round."
Said 'e, "The job's the very spit o' what it always were,
It's bread and bacon mostly when the dog don't catch a 'are;
But lookin' at it broad, an' while it ain't no merchant king's,
What's lost upon the roundabouts we pulls up on the swings!

"Goo' luck," said 'e; "Goo' luck," said I; "you've put it past a doubt;
An' keep that lurcher on the road, the gamekeepers is out."

'E thumped upon the footboard an' 'e lumbered on again
To meet a gold-dust sunset down the owl-light in the lane;
'An the moon she climbed the 'azels, while a night-jar seemed to spin
That Pharaoh's wisdom o'er again, 'is sooth of lose-and-win;
For "up an' down an' round," said 'e, "goes all appointed things,
An' losses on the roundabouts means profits on the swings!"

PATRICK R. CHALMERS.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I

My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears:
My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden fare;
But this was for my father's faith
I suffer'd chains and courted death;
That father perish'd at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven—who now are one,
Six in youth and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,
Proud of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd,

Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;—
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chained us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together—yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart;

'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound—not full and free
As they of yore were wont to be;
It might be fancy—but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do—and did my best—
And each did well in his degree.
The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven—
For him my soul was sorely moved:
And truly might it be distress'd
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day—
(When day was beautiful to me
As to young eagles being free)—
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
But form'd to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perished in the foremost rank
With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
His spirit wither'd with their clank.
I saw it silently decline—
And so perchance in sooth did mine:
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had follow'd there the deer and wolf;
To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls;
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave inthralls:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rock'd
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunters' fare,
And for the like had little care:
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb:
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth?—he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand—nor—dead,—
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died—and they unlock'd his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer—
They coldly laugh'd—and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was wither'd on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood:—
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmix'd with such—but sure and slow:
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender—kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray—
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur—not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;

And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listen'd, but I could not hear—
I call'd, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished;
I call'd, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rush'd to him:—I found him not,
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived—*I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last—the sole—the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope—but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

IX

What next befell me then and there
I know not well—I never knew—
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling—none
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;

For all was blank, and bleak, and grey,
It was not night—it was not day,
It was not even the dungeon light,
So hateful to my heavy sight.
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness—without a place;
There were no stars—no earth—no time—
No check—no change—no good—no crime—
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

X

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
The bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seem'd to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,

And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in winged guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile—
I sometimes deem'd that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal—well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,—
Lone—as the corse within its shroud,
Lone—as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was:—my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,

Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me;
No child—no sire—no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them—and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,

But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seem'd joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seem'd to fly,
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled—and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
And yet my glance, too much oppress'd,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count—I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free,
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where.
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
I learn'd to love despair.
And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home:
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watched them in their sullen trade,

Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell—
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

LORD BYRON.

"THE ISLES OF GREECE"

SONG FROM *DON JUAN*, CANTO III

THE isles of Greece! the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho lov'd and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse;
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' "Islands of the Blest."

The mountains look on Marathon
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations;—all were his!

He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set, where were they?

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
Must *we* but blush?—Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, "Let one living head,
But one, arise,—we come, we come!"
'Tis but the living who are dumb.

In vain—in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet;
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?

You have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells:
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells;
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad;

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

LORD BYRON.

THE PILOT OF THE PLAINS [1]

"FALSE," they said, "thy Pale-face lover, from the land of waking morn;
Rise and wed thy Redskin wooer, nobler warrior ne'er was born;
Cease thy watching, cease thy dreaming,
Show the white thine Indian scorn."

Thus they taunted her, declaring, "He remembers naught of thee:
Likely some white maid he wooeth, far beyond the inland sea."
But she answered ever kindly,
"He will come again to me."

Till the dusk of Indian summer crept athwart the western skies;
But a deeper dusk was burning in her dark and dreaming eyes,
As she scanned the rolling prairie,
Where the foothills fall and rise.

Till the autumn came and vanished, till the season of the rains,
Till the western world lay fettered in midwinter's crystal chains,
Still she listened for his coming,
Still she watched the distant plains.

[1] From *Flint and Feather*, by E. Pauline Johnson, published by arrangement with The Musson Book Co., Ltd., Toronto

Then a night with nor'land tempest, nor'land snows
a-swirling fast,
Out upon the pathless prairie came the Pale-face
through the blast,
Calling, calling, " Yakonwita,
I am coming, love, at last."

Hovered night above, about him, dark its wings and
cold and dread;
Never unto trail or tepee were his straying footsteps
led;
Till benumbed, he sank, and pillowed
On the drifting snows his head,

Saying, " O my Yakonwita, call me, call me, be my
guide
To the lodge beyond the prairie—for I vowed ere
winter died
I would come again, belovèd;
I would claim my Indian bride ! "

" Yakonwita, Yakonwita," O the dreariness that
strains
Through the voice that calling, quivers, till a whisper
but remains !
" Yakonwita, Yakonwita,
I am lost upon the plains ! "

But the Silent Spirit hushed him, lulled him as he
cried anew,
" Save me, save me, O belovèd, I am Pale, but I am
true !
Yakonwita, Yakonwita,
I am dying, love, for you ! "

Leagues afar, across the prairie, she had risen from
her bed,
Roused her kinsmen from their slumber: " He has
come to-night," she said.
" I can hear him calling, calling,
But his voice is as the dead.

'Listen!" and they sate all silent, while the tempest louder grew,
And a spirit-voice called faintly, "I am dying, love, for you."
Then they wailed, "O Yakonwita,
He was Pale, but he was true!"

Wrapped she then her ermine round her, stepped without the tepee door,
Saying, "I must follow, follow, though he call for evermore,
'Yakonwita, Yakonwita,'"
And they never saw her more.

Late at night, say Indian hunters, when the starlight clouds or wanes,
Far away they see a maiden, misty as the autumn rains,
Guiding with her lamp of moonlight
Hunters lost upon the plains.

PAULINE JOHNSON.

RIDING TOGETHER

FOR many, many days together
The wind blew steady from the East;
For many days hot grew the weather,
About the time of our Lady's Feast.

For many days we rode together,
Yet met we neither friend nor foe;
Hotter and clearer grew the weather,
Steadily did the East wind blow.

We saw the trees in the hot, bright weather,
Clear-cut, with shadows very black,
As freely we rode on together
With helms unlaced and bridles slack.

And often, as we rode together,
We, looking down the green-bank'd stream,
Saw flowers in the sunny weather,
And saw the bubble-making bream.

And in the night lay down together,
And hung above our heads the rood,
Or watch'd night-long in the dewy weather,
The while the moon did watch the wood.

Our spears stood bright and thick together,
Straight out the banners stream'd behind,
As we gallop'd on in the sunny weather,
With faces turn'd towards the wind.

Down sank our threescore spears together,
As thick we saw the pagans ride;
His eager face in the clear fresh weather,
Shone out that last time by my side.

Up the sweep of the bridge we dash'd together,
It rock'd to the crash of the meeting spears,
Down rain'd the buds of the dear spring weather,
The elm-tree flowers fell like tears.

There, as we roll'd and writhed together,
I threw my arms above my head,
For close by my side, in the lovely weather,
I saw him reel and fall back dead.

I and the slayer met together,
He waited the death-stroke there in his place,
With thoughts of death, in the lovely weather,
Gapingly mazed at my madden'd face.

Madly I fought as we fought together;
In vain: the little Christian band
The pagans drown'd, as in stormy weather,
The river drowns low-lying land.

They bound my blood-stain'd hands together,
They bound his corpse to nod by my side:
Then on we rode, in the bright March weather,
With clash of cymbals did we ride.

We ride no more, no more together;
My prison-bars are thick and strong,
I take no heed of any weather,
The sweet Saints grant I live not long.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE WELL OF ST. KEYNE

A WELL there is in the west country,
And a clearer one never was seen;
There is not a wife in the west country
But has heard of the Well of St. Keyne.

An oak and an elm tree stand beside,
And behind doth an ash tree grow,
And a willow from the bank above
Droops to the water below.

A traveller came to the Well of St. Keyne;
Joyfully he drew nigh,
For from cock-crow he had been travelling,
And there was not a cloud in the sky.

He drank of the water so cool and clear,
For thirsty and hot was he,
And he sat down upon the bank
Under the willow tree.

There came a man from the house hard by
At the Well to fill his pail;
On the Well-side he rested it,
And he bade the Stranger hail.

"Now art thou a bachelor, Stranger?" quoth he;
"For an if thou hast a wife,
The happiest draught thou hast drunk this day
That ever thou didst in thy life.

" Or hast thy good woman, if one thou hast,
Ever here in Cornwall been?
For an if she have, I'll venture my life
She has drunk of the Well of St. Keyne."

" I have left a good woman who never was here,"
The Stranger he made reply,
" But that my draught should be the better for that,
I pray you answer me why? "

" St. Keyne," quoth the Cornish-man, " many a time
Drank of this crystal Well,
And before the Angel summon'd her,
She laid on the water a spell.

" If the husband of this gifted Well
Shall drink before his Wife,
A happy man henceforth is he,
For he shall be Master for life.

" But if the Wife should drink of it first,—
God help the Husband then! "
The Stranger stoopt to the Well of St. Keyne,
And drank of the water again.

" You drank of the Well I warrant betimes? "
He to the Cornish-man said;
But the Cornish-man smiled as the stranger spake,
And sheepishly shook his head.

" I hasten'd as soon as the wedding was done,
And left my Wife in the porch;
But i'faith she had been wiser than me,
For she took a bottle to Church."

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM

IT was a summer evening,
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun,

And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet
In playing there had found;
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
And with a natural sigh,
"'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
"Who fell in the great victory.

"I find them in the garden,
For there's many here about;
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out!
For many thousand men," said he,
"Were slain in that great victory."

"Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
Young Peterkin, he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes;
"Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for."

"It was the English," Kaspar cried,
"Who put the French to rout;
But what they fought each other for,
I could not well make out.
But everybody said," quoth he,
"That 'twas a famous victory.

"My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;

So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

" With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born baby, died;
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

" They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun;
But things like that, you know. must be
After a famous victory."

" Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,
And our good Prince Eugene."
" Why, 'twas a very wicked thing! "
Said little Wilhelmine.
" Nay—nay—my little girl," quoth he,
" It was a famous victory.

" And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win."
" But what good came of it at last? "
Quoth little Peterkin.
" Why, that I cannot tell," said he,
" But 'twas a famous victory."

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

THE STONE

A MAN! a man! There is a man loose in Canada,
A man of heroic mould, a " throwback " of earlier ages,
Vigorous, public-spirited, not afraid of work!
A doer of deeds, not a dreamer and babbler;
A man, simple, direct, unaffected.
Such a one as Walt Whitman would have gloried in,
And made immortal in rugged man-poetry—

Vast polyphloisboian verse such as erstwhile he bellowed
Through roaring storm winds to the bull-mouthed Atlantic.

And yesterday the man passed among us unnoted!
Did his deed and went his way without boasting,
Leaving his act to speak, himself silent!

And I, beholding the marvel, stood for a space astonied,
Then threw up my hat and chortled,
And whooped in dithyrambic exultation.
Hark to my tale!

On the sixteenth sidereal of the township of Ekbid,
Just south of the second concession line, some mile from the corner,
There was a stone, a stone in the road, a stumbling-block;
A jagged chunk of granite dropped from the jaw of a glacier
In an earlier age when the mountains were oldest;
A rock that horses tripped on, wheels bumped on, and sleigh-runners screeched on,
And no man in all the land had the gumption to dig it out.
Path-master after path-master, full of his pride of office,
Rode by with haughty brow, and regarded it not,
Seeing only the weeds in the field of the amateur farmer,
And wrestling minatory letters ordering them out,
But leaving the stone.
Oft in my hot youth I, riding in a lumber waggon,
By that lurking stone was catapulted skyward,
And picked myself up raging and vowing to dig it out—
But dig it not. I didn't have a spade,
Or, if I had a spade, I had a lame back—always an excuse.

And the stone stayed.
As passed the years—good years, bad years,
Years that were wet or dry, lean years and fat years,
Roaring election years (mouthing reforms); in short, all years
That oldest inhabitants keep in stock—there grew a tradition
About the stone. Men, it was said, had tried to move it,
But it was a stubborn boulder, deep sunk in the earth,
And could only be moved by dynamite, at vast cost to the council;
But every councillor was a watch-dog of the treasury,
And the stone stayed.
Since the memory of man runneth the stone was there.
It had stubbed the toe of the Algonquin brave, and haply
Had tripped the ferocious, marauding Iroquois.
It had jolted the slow, wobbling ox-cart of the pioneer;
Jolted the lumber waggons, democrats, buggies, sulkies;
Jolted the pungs, crotches, stoneboats, bobsleighs, cutters;
Upset loads of bolts, staves, cordwood, loads of logs and hay;
Jolted threshing machines, traction engines, automobiles.
Milk waggons, with cans of whey, envied of querulous swine;
It had shattered the dreams of farmers, figuring on crops;
Of drovers planning the sharp deals;
Of peddlers, agents, doctors, preachers;
It had jolted lovers into closer embraces, to their bashful delight;
But mostly it had shaken men into sinful tempers—

A wicked stone, a disturbing stone, a stumbling-block—
A stone in the middle of the road—
Insolent as a bank, obstructive as a merger!

Year after year the road flowed around it,
Now on the right side, now on the left;
But always on dark nights flowing straight over it,
Jolting the belated traveller into a passion black as midnight,
Making his rocking vocabulary slop over
With all the shorter and uglier words.
Boys grew to manhood and men grew to dotage.
And year after year they did statute-labour
By cutting the thistles and golden-rod, milkweeds and burdocks,
But left the stone untouched.
There is a merry tale that I heard in my childhood,
Standing between my father's knees, before the open fireplace,
Watching the sparks make soldiers on the blazing backlog,
While the shadows danced on the low-beamed ceiling,
A pretty tale, such as children love, and it comes to me now;
Comes with the sharp, crisp smell of wood smoke,
The crackle of flaming cordwood on the dockers,
The dancing shadows and the hand on my tousled head—
A clear memory, a dear memory, and ever the stone
As it lay in my path on the roadway brought back the story—
The loving voice, and, at the close, the laughter.

"Once upon a time there was a king, a mighty ruler,
Deep in the lore of human hearts, wise as a serpent,
Who placed a stone in the road, in the midst of his kingdom,
On the way to his palace, where all men must pass it.

Straightway the people turned aside, turning to right and to left of it.
Statesmen, scholars, courtiers, noblemen, merchants,
Beggars, labourers, farmers, soldiers, generals, men of all classes,
Passed the stone, and none tried to move it
To clear the path of the travelling multitude.
But one day came a man, a kindly poor man,
Who thought it a shame that the stone should be there,
A stumbling-block to the nation. Bowing his back
He put his shoulder to it, and behold a marvel!
The stone was but a shell, hollow as a bowl!
A child might have moved it.
And in the hollow was a purse of gold, and with it a writing:
'Let him who hath the public spirit to move the stone
Keep the purse and buy a courtly robe,
And come to the palace to serve the king as prime minister.'
So the kindly poor man who had public spirit
Became the chief ruler of all the nation.
When the news was told to them, all men rushed to the highways
And moved away the stones, but found no purse of gold;
But they cleared the roads of stones, and the 'Good Roads Movement'
Went through without cost because the king was wise
And well understood our weak human nature."

Ever when passing the stone I remembered this story
And smiled, touched by memories of childhood,
But knew there was no purse under it; there might be an angle-worm,
But I was not going fishing—and the stone stayed.

Now mark the sequel, the conclusion of the matter!

Yesterday a man went by—whether a neighbour or stranger,
No man can tell me, though I have questioned widely,
Questioned eagerly, longing to do him honour,
To chant his name in song, or cunningly engrave it
In monumental brass, with dædal phantasies—
To make it a landmark, a beacon to all future ages.
This good man, earnest, public-spirited,
Not fearing work, scorning tradition,
Doing his duty as he saw it, not waiting an order,
Dug out the stone and made it a matter of laughter,
For it was no boulder, deep-rooted, needing dynamite,
But just a little stone, about the size of a milk pail.
A child might have moved it, and yet it had bumped us
For three generations because we lacked public spirit.
I blush with shame as I pass the stone now lying
In the roadside ditch where the good man rolled it,
And left it where all men may see it—a symbol, a portent.

Tremble, ye Oppressors! Quake, ye Financial Pirates!
Your day is at hand, for there is a man loose in Canada!
A man to break through your illegal labyrinths,
A Theseus to cope with your corporate Minotaurs,
A Hercules to clean out your Augean stables of grafters,
A man who moves stones from the path of his fellows!
And makes smooth the Way of the Worker!
And such a man may move you! Tremble, I say!

PETER MCARTHUR.

AT THE CEDARS

You had two girls—Baptiste—
One is Virginie—
Hold hard—Baptiste!
Listen to me.

The whole drive was jammed
In that bend at the Cedars,
The rapids were dammed
With the logs tight rammed
And crammed; you might know
The Devil had clinched them below.

We worked three days—not a budge,
"She's as tight as a wedge, on the ledge,"
Says our foreman;
"Mon Dieu! boys, look here,
We must get this thing clear."

He cursed at the men
And we went for it then;
With our cant-dogs arow,
We just gave he-yo-ho;
When she gave a big shove
From above.

The gang yelled and tore
For the shore,
The logs gave a grind
Like a wolf's jaws behind,
And as quick as a flash,
With a shove and a crash,
They were down in a mash,
But I and ten more,
All but Isaac Dufour,
Were ashore.

He leaped on a log in the front of the rush,
And shot out from the bind
While the jam roared behind;
As he floated along
He balanced his pole
And tossed us a song.
But just as we cheered,
Up darted a log from the bottom,
Leaped thirty feet square and fair,
And came down on his own.

He went up like a block
With the shock,
And when he was there
In the air,
Kissed his hand to the land;
When he dropped
My heart stopped,
For the first logs had caught him
And crushed him;
When he rose in his place
There was blood on his face.

There were some girls, Baptiste,
Picking berries on the hillside,
Where the river curls, Baptiste,
You know—on the still side.
One was down by the water,
She saw Isaac
Fall back.

She did not scream, Baptiste,
She launched her canoe;
It did seem, Baptiste,
That she wanted to die too,
For before you could think
The birch cracked like a shell
In that rush of hell,
And I saw them both sink—

Baptiste!—
He had two girls,
One is Virginie,
What God calls the other
Is not known to me.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT.

A MOTHER IN EGYPT

"About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon the throne, even unto the firstborn of the maid-servant that is behind the mill."

Is the noise of grief in the palace over the river
For this silent one at my side?
There came a hush in the night, and he rose with his hands a-quiver
Like lotus petals adrift on the swing of the tide.
O small soft hands, the day groweth old for sleeping!
O small still feet, rise up, for the hour is late!
Rise up, my son, for I hear them mourning and weeping
In the temple down by the gate.

Hushed is the face that was wont to brighten with laughter
When I sang at the mill,
And silence unbroken shall greet the sorrowful dawns hereafter,
The house shall be still.
Voice after voice takes up the burden of wailing,—
Do you heed, do you hear?—in the high-priest's house by the wall;
But mine is the grief, and their sorrow is all unavailing.
Will he wake at their call?

Something I saw of the broad, dim wings half folding
The passionless brow,
Something I saw of the sword the shadowy hands were holding,—
What matters it now?
I held you close, dear face, as I knelt and hearkened
To the wind that cried last night like a soul in sin,
When the broad, bright stars dropped down and the soft sky darkened,
And the Presence moved therein.

I have heard men speak in the market-place of the city,
Low-voiced, in a breath,
Of a god who is stronger than ours, and who knows not changing nor pity,
Whose anger is death.
Nothing I know of the lords of the outland races,
But Amun is gentle and Hathor the Mother is mild,
And who would descend from the light of the peaceful places
To war on a child?

Yet here he lies, with a scarlet pomegranate petal
Blown down on his cheek.
The slow sun sinks to the sand like a shield of some burnished metal,
But he does not speak.
I have called, I have sung, but neither will hear nor waken;
So lightly, so whitely he lies in the curve of my arm,
Like a feather let fall from the bird that the arrow hath taken.
Who could see him, and harm?

"The swallow flies home to her sleep in the eaves of the altar,
And the crane to her nest,"—
So do we sing o'er the mill, and why, ah, why should I falter,
Since he goes to his rest?
Does he play in their flowers as he played among these with his mother?
Do the gods smile downward and love him and give him their care?
Guard him well, O ye gods, till I come; lest the wrath of that Other
Should reach to him there!

MARJORIE L. C. PICKTHALL.

JOHN GILPIN

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London Town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linendraper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the Calender,
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mistress Gilpin, "That's well said;
And, for that wine is dear,
We will be furnish'd with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife;
O'erjoy'd was he to find
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
Where they did all get in,
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels;
Were never folks so glad:
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin, at his horse's side,
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty, screaming, came downstairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he, "yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise."

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone-bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipp'd from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well-brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which gall'd him in his seat.

So, " Fair and softly ! " John he cried,
But John he cried in vain ;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought ;
Away went hat and wig ;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out—" Well done ! "
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around,
" He carries weight;" " he rides a race ! "
" 'Tis for a thousand pound ! "

And still as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made the horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the Wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcóny spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house!"
—They all at once did cry;
"The dinner waits, and we are tired;"
Said Gilpin, "So am I!"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there;
For why? his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the Calender's
His horse at last stood still.

The Calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him.

"What news? what news? your tidings tell!
Tell me you must and shall—
Say, why bare-headed you are come,
Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the Calender
In merry guise he spoke:

"I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forbode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road."

The Calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came, with hat and wig,
A wig that flow'd behind;
A hat not much the worse for wear;
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus show'd his ready wit:
"My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

"But let me scrape the dirt away,
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware!"

So, turning to his horse, he said,
"I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig;
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why?—they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pull'd out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell,
" This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frighten'd steed he frighten'd more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry :—

" Stop thief !—stop thief !—a highwayman ! "
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that pass'd that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space :
The toll-men thinking as before
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too !
For he got first to town;
Nor stopp'd, till where he had got up
He did again get down.

—Now let us sing, Long live the King,
And Gilpin, long live he;
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!

WILLIAM COWPER.

MY SISTER'S SLEEP

SHE fell asleep on Christmas Eve:
At length the long-ungranted shade
Of weary eyelids overweighed
The pain nought else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day
Over the bed from chime to chime,
Then raised herself for the first time,
And as she sat her down, did pray.

Her little work-table was spread
With work to finish. For the glare
Made by her candle, she had care
To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up,
Of winter radiance sheer and thin;
The hollow halo it was in
Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle sound
Of flame, by vents the fireshine drove
And reddened. In its dim alcove
The mirror shed a clearness round.

I had been sitting up some nights,
And my tired mind felt weak and blank;
Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank
The stillness and the broken lights.

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling years
Heard in each hour, crept off; and then
The ruffled silence spread again,
Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat :
Her needles, as she laid them down,
Met lightly, and her silken gown
Settled : no other noise than that.

" Glory unto the Newly Born ! "
So, as said angels, she did say ;
Because we were in Christmas Day,
Though it would still be long till morn.

Just then in the room over us
There was a pushing back of chairs,
As some who had sat unawares
So late, now heard the hour, and rose.

With anxious softly-stepping haste
Our Mother went where Margaret lay,
Fearing the sounds o'erhead—should they
Have broken her long-watched-for rest !

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned ;
But suddenly turned back again ;
And all her features seemed in pain
With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,
And held my breath, and spoke no word :
There was none spoken ; but I heard
The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept :
And both my arms fell, and I said,
" God knows I knew that she was dead."
And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn
A little after twelve o'clock
We said, ere the first quarter struck,
" Christ's blessing on the newly born ! "

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

JOHN OF TOURS

(OLD FRENCH)

JOHN OF TOURS is back with peace,
But he comes home ill at ease.

"Good-morrow, mother." "Good-morrow, son;
Your wife has borne you a little one."

"Go now, mother, go before,
Make me a bed upon the floor;

"Very low your foot must fall,
That my wife hear not at all."

As it neared the midnight toll,
John of Tours gave up his soul.

"Tell me now, my mother my dear,
What's the crying that I hear?"

"Daughter, it's the children wake
Crying with their teeth that ache."

"Tell me though, my mother my dear,
What's the knocking that I hear?"

"Daughter, it's the carpenter
Mending planks upon the stair."

"Tell me, too, my mother my dear,
What's the singing that I hear?"

"Daughter, it's the priests in rows
Going round about our house."

"Tell me then, my mother my dear,
What's the dress that I should wear?"

"Daughter, any reds or blues,
But the black is most in use."

"Nay, but say, my mother my dear,
Why do you fall weeping here?"

" Oh ! the truth must be said,—
It's that John of Tours is dead."

" Mother, let the sexton know
That the grave must be for two;

" Aye, and still have room to spare,
For you must shut the baby there."

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

FIDELITY

A BARKING sound the Shepherd hears,
A cry as of a dog or fox;
He halts—and searches with his eyes
Among the scattered rocks:
And now at distance can discern
A stirring in a brake of fern;
And instantly a dog is seen,
Glancing through that covert green.

The Dog is not of mountain breed;
Its motions, too, are wild and shy;
With something, as the Shepherd thinks,
Unusual in its cry:
Nor is there any one in sight
All round, in hollow or on height;
Nor shout, nor whistle strikes his ear;
What is the creature doing here?

It was a cove, a huge recess,
That keeps, till June, December's snow;
A lofty precipice in front,
A silent tarn below!
Far in the bosom of Helvellyn,
Remote from public road or dwelling,
Pathway, or cultivated land;
From trace of human foot or hand.

There sometimes doth a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;

The crags repeat the raven's croak,
In symphony austere;
Thither the rainbow comes—the cloud—
And mists that spread the flying shroud;
And sunbeams; and the sounding blast,
That, if it could, would hurry past;
But that enormous barrier holds it fast.

Not free from boding thoughts, a while
The Shepherd stood; then makes his way
O'er rocks and stones, following the Dog
As quickly as he may;
Nor far had gone before he found
A human skeleton on the ground;
The appalled Discoverer with a sigh
Looks round, to learn the history.

From those abrupt and perilous rocks
The Man had fallen, that place of fear!
At length upon the Shepherd's mind
It breaks, and all is clear:
He instantly recalled the name,
And who he was, and whence he came;
Remembered, too, the very day
On which the Traveller passed this way.

But hear a wonder, for whose sake
This lamentable tale I tell!
A lasting monument of words
This wonder merits well.
The Dog, which still was hovering nigh,
Repeating the same timid cry,
This Dog had been through three months' space
A dweller in that savage place.

Yes, proof was plain that, since the day
When this ill-fated Traveller died,
The Dog had watched about the spot,
Or by his master's side:

How nourished here through such long time
He knows, who gave that love sublime;
And gave that strength of feeling, great
Above all human estimate!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE YARN OF THE *NANCY BELL*

'TWAS on the shores that round our coast
From Deal to Ramsgate span,
That I found alone on a piece of stone
An elderly naval man.

His hair was weedy, his beard was long,
And weedy and long was he,
And I heard this wight on the shore recite,
In a singular minor key:

"Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

And he shook his fists and he tore his hair,
Till I really felt afraid,
For I couldn't help thinking the man had been drinking,
And so I simply said:

"Oh, elderly man, it's little I know
Of the duties of men of the sea,
And I'll eat my hand if I understand
However you can be

"At once a cook, and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig.
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

Then he gave a hitch to his trousers, which
Is a trick all seamen larn,
And having got rid of a thumping quid,
He spun this painful yarn :

" 'Twas in the good ship *Nancy Bell*
That we sailed to the Indian Sea,
And there on a reef we come to grief,
Which has often occurred to me.

" And pretty nigh all the crew was drowned
(There was seventy-seven o' soul),
And only ten of the *Nancy's* men
Said ' Here ! ' to the muster-roll.

" There was me and the cook and the captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And the bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig.

" For a month we'd neither wittles nor drink,
Till a-hungry we did feel,
So we drawed a lot, and accordin' shot
The captain for our meal.

" The next lot fell to the *Nancy's* mate,
And a delicate dish he made;
Then our appetite with the midshipmite
We seven survivors stayed.

" And then we murdered the bo'sun tight,
And he much resembled pig;
Then we wittled free, did the cook and me,
On the crew of the captain's gig.

"Then only the cook and me was left,
And the delicate question, ' Which
Of us two goes to the kettle? ' arose,
And we argued it out as sich.

" For I loved that cook as a brother, I did,
And the cook he worshipped me;
But we'd both be blowed if we'd either be stowed
In the other chap's hold, you see.

" ' I'll be eat if you dines off me,' says TOM;
  ' Yes, that,' says I, ' you'll be.
I'm boiled if I die, my friend,' quoth I;
  And ' Exactly so,' quoth he.

" Says he, ' Dear JAMES, to murder me
  Were a foolish thing to do,
For don't you see that you can't cook *me*,
  While I can—and will—cook *you*! '

" So he boils the water, and takes the salt
  And the pepper in portions true
(Which he never forgot), and some chopped shallot,
  And some sage and parsley too.

" ' Come here,' says he, with a proper pride,
  Which his smiling features tell,
' 'Twill soothing be if I let you see
  How extremely nice you'll smell.'

" And he stirred it round and round and round,
  And he sniffed at the foaming froth;
When I ups with his heels, and smothers his squeals
  In the scum of the boiling broth.

" And I eat that cook in a week or less,
  And—as I eating be
The last of his chops, why, I almost drops,
  For a wessel in sight I see!

. . . . . .

" And I never larf, and I never smile,
  And I never lark nor play,
But sit and croak, and a single joke
  I have—which is to say:

" ' Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
  And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
  And the crew of the captain's gig! ' "

W. S. GILBERT.

THE VIOLINIST

In Dresden in the square one day,
His face of parchment, seamed and gray,
With wheezy bow and proffered hat,
An old blind violinist sat.

Like one from whose worn heart the heat
Of life had long ago retired,
He played to the unheeding street
Until the thin old hands were tired.

Few marked the player how he played,
Or how the child beside his knee
Besought the passers-by for aid
So softly and so wistfully.

A stranger passed. The little hand
Went forth, so often checked and spurned.
The stranger wavered, came to stand,
Looked round with absent eyes and turned.

He saw the sightless withered face,
The tired old hands, the whitened hair,
The child with such a mournful grace,
The little features pinched and spare.

"I have no money, but," said he,
"Give me the violin and bow.
I'll play a little, we shall see
Whether the gold will come or no."

First from the shouting bow he sent
A summons, an impetuous call;
Then some old store of grief long pent
Broke from his heart and mastered all.

The tumult sank at his command,
The passing wheels were hushed and stilled;
The burning soul, the sweeping hand
A sacred ecstasy fulfilled.

The darkness of the outer strife,
The weariness and want within,
The giant wrongfulness of life,
Leaped storming from the violin.

The jingling round of pleasure broke,
Gay carriages were drawn anear,
And all the proud and haughty folk
Leaned from their cushioned seats to hear.

And then the player changed his tone,
And wrought another miracle
Of music, half a prayer, half moan,
A cry exceeding sorrowful.

A strain of pity for the weak,
The poor that fall without a cry,
The common hearts that never speak,
But break beneath the press and die.

Throughout the great and silent crowd
The music fell on human ears,
And many kindly heads were bowed,
And many eyes were warm with tears.

"And now your gold," the player cried,
"While love is master of your mood;"
He bowed, and turned, and slipped aside,
And vanished in the multitude.

And all the people flocked at that,
The money like a torrent rolled,
Until the gray old battered hat
Was bursting to the brim with gold.

And loudly as the giving grew,
The question rose on every part,
If any named or any knew
The stranger with so great a heart,

Or what the moving wonder meant,
Such playing never heard before;
A lady from her carriage leant,
And murmured softly, "It was Spohr."

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN.

LOW TIDE ON GRAND PRÉ

THE sun goes down, and over all
These barren reaches by the tide
Such unelusive glories fall,
I almost dream they yet will bide
Until the coming of the tide.

And yet I know that not for us,
By any ecstasy of dream,
He lingers to keep luminous
A little while the grievous stream,
Which frets, uncomforted of dream;—

A grievous stream, that to and fro,
All through the fields of Acadie
Goes wandering, as if to know
Why one belovèd face should be
So long from home and Acadie!

Was it a year or lives ago
We took the grasses on our hands,
And caught the summer flying low
Over the waving meadow-lands,
And held it there between our hands?

The while the river at our feet—
A drowsy inland meadow stream—
At set of sun the after-heat
Made running gold, and in the gleam
We freed our birch upon the stream.

There down along the elms at dusk
We lifted dripping blade to drift,
Through twilight scented fine like musk
Where night and gloom awhile uplift,
Nor sunder soul and soul adrift.

And that we took into our hands—
Spirit of life or subtler thing—
Breathed on us there, and loosed the bands
Of death, and taught us, whispering,
The secret of some wonder-thing.

Then all your face grew light, and seemed
To hold the shadow of the sun;
The evening faltered, and I deemed
That time was ripe, and years had done
Their wheeling underneath the sun.

So all desire and all regret,
And fear and memory, were naught;
One to remember or forget
The keen delight our hearts had caught;
Morrow and yesterday were naught!

The night has fallen, and the tide . . .
Now and again comes drifting home,
Across these aching barrens wide,
A sigh like driven wind or foam;
In grief the flood is bursting home!

W. Bliss Carman.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

A CHILD'S STORY

I

HAMELIN Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The River Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

II

Rats!
They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cook's own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:
"'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!

You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV

An hour they sat in council,
At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
I'm sure my poor head aches again
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!

V

"Come in!"—the Mayor cried, looking bigger:
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red;
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,

But lips where smiles went out and in—
There was no guessing his kith and kin!
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire:
Quoth one: "It's as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!"

VI

He advanced to the council-table:
And, "Please your honours," said he, "I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep, or swim, or fly, or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole, and toad, and newt, and viper;
And people call me the Pied Piper."
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same check;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
"Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats:
And, as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
"One? fifty thousand!"—was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled
Like a candle flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling;
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser,
Wherein all plunged and perished!
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary,
Which was, "At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe:
And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And the drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;

And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, 'Oh rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!'
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, 'Come, bore me!'
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple;
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles!
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!"—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

IX

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
For council dinners made rare havock
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,

And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But, as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty;
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait, beside
I've promised to visit by dinner time
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the Head Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor—
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe after another fashion."

XI

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I'll brook
Being worse treated than a Cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

XII

Once more he stept into the street;
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling, that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling.
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping, and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,

Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,
—Could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain's side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me;
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,

Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings;
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the Hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!"

XIV

Alas, alas for Hamelin!
There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says, that Heaven's Gate
Opes to the Rich at as easy rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North, and South
To offer the Piper by word of mouth,
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
On the Twenty-second of Júly,
Thirteen hundred and Seventy-six:"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the Children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—

Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they Hostelry or Tavern
To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
They wrote the story on a column,
And on the Great Church Window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away;
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people who ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

XV

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers:
And, whether they pipe us free fróm rats or fróm mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise!

ROBERT BROWNING.

DRAKE'S DRUM

DRAKE he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the Island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor-lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,

An' the shore-lights flashin', and the night-tide dashin',
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' rüled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the channel as we drummed them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin'
They shall find him ware an' wakin', as they found him long ago!

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT.

VITAÏ LAMPADA

THERE'S a breathless hush in the Close to-night—
Ten to make and the match to win—
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote—
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red,—
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;—
The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.

The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honour a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

This is the word that, year by year,
While in her place the School is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind—
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT.

HE FELL AMONG THIEVES

"YE have robbed," said he, "ye have slaughtered and made an end,
Take your ill-got plunder, and bury the dead:
What will ye more of your guest and sometime friend?"
"Blood for our blood," they said.

He laughed: "If one may settle the score for five,
I am ready: but let the reckoning stand till day;
I have loved the sunlight as dearly as any alive."
"You shall die at dawn," said they.

He flung his empty revolver down the slope,
He climbed alone to the eastward edge of the trees;
All night long in a dream untroubled of hope
He brooded, clasping his knees.

He did not hear the monotonous roar that fills
The ravine where the Yassin river sullenly flows;
He did not see the starlight on the Laspur hills,
Or the far Afghan snows.

He saw the April noon on his books aglow,
The wistaria trailing in at the window wide;

He heard his father's voice from the terrace below
Calling him down to ride.

He saw the grey little church across the park,
The mounds that hide the loved and honoured dead;
The Norman arch, the chancel softly dark,
The brasses black and red.

He saw the School Close, sunny and green,
The runner beside him, the stand by the parapet wall,
The distant tape, and the crowd roaring between
His own name over all.

He saw the dark wainscot and timbered roof,
The long tables, and the faces merry and keen;
The College Eight and their trainer dining aloof,
The Dons on the daïs serene.

He watched the liner's stem ploughing the foam,
He felt her trembling speed and the thrash of her screw;
He heard her passengers' voices talking of home,
He saw the flag she flew.

And now it was dawn. He rose strong on his feet,
And strode to his ruin'd camp below the wood;
He drank the breath of the morning cool and sweet;
His murderers round him stood.

Light on the Laspur hills was broadening fast,
The blood-red snow-peaks chilled to a dazzling white:
He turned, and saw the golden circle at last
Cut by the eastern height.

"O glorious Life, Who dwellest in earth and sun,
I have lived, I praise and adore Thee."
A sword swept.
Over the pass the voices one by one
Faded, and the hill slept.

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT.

THE LOST LEADER

I

JUST for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!
Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

II

We shall march prospering,—not thro' his presence;
Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire:
Blot out his name, then,—record one lost soul more,
One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more devils' triumph, and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins: let him never come back to us!
There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him,—strike gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
Pardoned in Heaven, the first by the throne!

ROBERT BROWNING.

KING HENRY VII AND THE SHIPWRIGHTS

(A.D. 1487)

HARRY, our King in England, from London town is gone,
And comen to Hamull on the Hoke in the Countie of Suthampton.
For there lay the *Mary of the Tower*, his ship of war so strong,
And he would discover, certaynely, if his shipwrights did him wrong.

He told not none of his setting forth, nor yet where he would go,
(But only my Lord of Arundel) and meanly did he show,
In an old jerkin and patched hose that no man might him mark.
With his frieze hood and cloak above, he looked like any clerk.

He was at Hamull on the Hoke about the hour of the tide,
And saw the *Mary* haled into dock, the winter to abide,
With all her tackle and habiliments which are the King his own; 11
But then ran on his false shipwrights and stripped her to the bone.

They heaved the main-mast overboard, that was of a trusty tree,
And they wrote down it was spent and lost by force of weather at sea.
But they sawen it into planks and strakes as far as it might go,
To maken beds for their own wives and little children also.
There was a knave called Slingawai, he crope beneath the deck,
Crying: "Good felawes, come and see! The ship is nigh a wreck!

For the storm that took our tall main-mast, it blew so fierce and fell,
Alack! it hath taken the kettles and pans, and this brass pott as well!"

With that he set the pott on his head and hied him up the hatch,
While all the shipwrights ran below to find what they might snatch;
All except Bob Brygandyne and he was a yeoman good,
He caught Slingawai round the waist and threw him on to the mud.

"I have taken plank and rope and nail, without the King his leave,
After the custom of Portesmouth, but I will not suffer a thief.
Nay, never lift up thy hand at me—there's no clean hands in the trade—
Steal in measure," quo' Brygandyne. "There's measure in all things made!"

"Gramercy, yeoman!" said our King. "Thy council liketh me."
And he pulled a whistle out of his neck and whistled whistles three.
Then came my Lord of Arundel pricking across the down,
And behind him the Mayor and Burgesses of merry Suthampton town.

They drew the naughty shipwrights up, with the kettles in their hands,
And bound them round the forecastle to wait the King's commands.
But "Sith ye have made your beds," said the King, "ye needs must lie thereon.
For the sake of your wives and little ones—felawes, get you gone!"

When they had beaten Slingawai, out of his own lips
Our King appointed Brygandyne to be Clerk of all his ships.
"Nay, never lift up thy hands to me—there's no clean hands in the trade.
But steal in measure," said Harry our King. "There's measure in all things made!"

God speed the "Mary of the Tower," the "Sovereign," and "Grace Dieu."
The "Sweepstakes" and the "Mary Fortune," and the "Henry of Bristol" too!
All tall ships that sail on the sea, or in our harbours stand,
That they may keep measure with Harry our King and peace in Engeland!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

THE RED FISHERMAN

OR THE DEVIL'S DECOY

"Oh flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified;"
Romeo and Juliet.

THE Abbot arose, and closed his book,
And donned his sandal shoon,
And wandered forth, alone, to look
Upon the summer moon:
A starlight sky was o'er his head,
A quiet breeze around;
And the flowers a thrilling fragrance shed
And the waves a soothing sound:
It was not an hour, nor a scene, for aught
But love and calm delight;
Yet the holy man had a cloud of thought
On his wrinkled brow that night.
He gazed on the river that gurgled by,
But he thought not of the reeds;
He clasped his gilded rosary,
But he did not tell the beads;
If he looked to the heaven, 'twas not to invoke
The Spirit that dwelleth there;

If he opened his lips, the words they spoke
Had never the tone of prayer.
A pious priest might the Abbot seem,
He had swayed the crozier well;
But what was the theme of the Abbot's dream,
The Abbot were loth to tell.

Companionless, for a mile or more,
He traced the windings of the shore,
Oh, beauteous is that river still,
As it winds by many a sloping hill,
And many a dim o'erarching grove,
And many a flat and sunny cove,
And terraced lawns, whose bright arcades
The honeysuckle sweetly shades,
And rocks, whose very crags seem bowers,
So gay they are with grass and flowers!
But the Abbot was thinking of scenery
About as much, in sooth,
As a lover thinks of constancy,
Or an advocate of truth.
He did not mark how the skies in wrath
Grew dark above his head;
He did not mark how the mossy path
Grew damp beneath his tread;
And nearer he came, and still more near,
To a pool, in whose recess
The water had slept for many a year,
Unchanged and motionless;
From the river stream it spread away
The space of half a rood;
The surface had the hue of clay
And the scent of human blood;
The trees and the herbs that round it grew
Were venomous and foul,
And the birds that through the bushes flew
Were the vulture and the owl;
The water was as dark and rank
As ever a Company pumped,
And the perch, that was netted and laid on the bank,
Grew rotten while it jumped;

And bold was he who thither came
  At midnight, man or boy,
For the place was cursed with an evil name,
  And that name was " The Devil's Decoy ! "

The Abbot was weary as abbot could be,
And he sat down to rest on the stump of a tree :
When suddenly rose a dismal tone,—
Was it a song, or was it a moan ?—

  " O ho ! O ho !
  Above,—below,—
Lightly and brightly they glide and go !
The hungry and keen on the top are leaping,
The lazy and fat in the depths are sleeping ;
Fishing is fine when the pool is muddy,
Broiling is rich when the coals are ruddy ! "—
In a monstrous fright, by the murky light,
He looked to the left and he looked to the right,
And what was the vision close before him,
That flung such a sudden stupor o'er him ?
'Twas a sight to make the hair uprise,
  And the life-blood colder run :
The startled Priest struck both his thighs,
  And the abbey clock struck one !

All alone, by the side of the pool,
A tall man sat on a three-legged stool,
Kicking his heels on the dewy sod,
And putting in order his reel and rod ;
Red were the rags his shoulders wore,
And a high red cap on his head he bore ;
His arms and his legs were long and bare ;
And two or three locks of long red hair
Were tossing about his scraggy neck,
Like a tattered flag o'er a splitting wreck.
It might be time, or it might be trouble,
Had bent that stout back nearly double,
Sunk in their deep and hollow sockets
That blazing couple of Congreve rockets,
And shrunk and shrivelled that tawny skin,
Till it hardly covered the bones within.

The line the Abbot saw him throw
Had been fashioned and formed long ages ago,
And the hands that worked his foreign vest
Long years ago had gone to their rest :
You would have sworn, as you looked on them,
He had fished in the Flood with Ham and Shem !

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
Minnow or gentle, worm or fly,—
It seemed not such to the Abbot's eye;
Gaily it glittered with jewel and gem,
And its shape was the shape of a diadem.
It was fastened a gleaming hook about
By a chain within and a chain without;
The Fisherman gave it a kick and a spin,
And the water fizzed as it tumbled in !

From the bowels of the earth,
Strange and varied sounds had birth;
Now the battle's bursting peal,
Neigh of steed, and clang of steel;
Now an old man's hollow groan
Echoed from the dungeon stone;
Now the weak and wailing cry
Of a stripling's agony !—
Cold by this was the midnight air;
But the Abbot's blood ran colder,
When he saw a gasping Knight lie there,
With a gash beneath his clotted hair,
And a hump upon his shoulder.
And the loyal churchman strove in vain
To mutter a Pater Noster;
For he who writhed in mortal pain
Was camped that night on Bosworth plain—
The cruel Duke of Gloster !

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
It was a haunch of princely size,
Filling with fragrance earth and skies.
The corpulent Abbot knew full well
The swelling form, and the steaming smell;

Never a monk that wore a hood
Could better have guessed the very wood
Where the noble hart had stood at bay,
Weary and wounded, at close of day.

Sounded then the noisy glee
Of a revelling company,—
Sprightly story, wicked jest,
Rated servant, greeted guest,
Flow of wine, and flight of cork,
Stroke of knife, and thrust of fork :
But, where'er the board was spread,
Grace, I ween, was never said !—
Pulling and tugging, the Fisherman sat;
  And the Priest was ready to vomit,
When he hauled out a gentleman, fine and fat,
With a belly as big as a brimming vat,
  And a nose as red as a comet.
" A capital stew," the Fisherman said,
  " With cinnamon and sherry ! "
And the Abbot turned away his head,
For his brother was lying before him dead,
  The Mayor of St. Edmund's Bury !

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
It was a bundle of beautiful things,—
A peacock's tail, and a butterfly's wings,
A scarlet slipper, an auburn curl,
A mantle of silk, and a bracelet of pearl,
And a packet of letters, from whose sweet fold
Such a stream of delicate odours rolled,
That the Abbot fell on his face, and fainted,
And deemed his spirit was half-way sainted.

Sounds seemed dropping from the skies,
Stifled whispers, smothered sighs,
And the breath of vernal gales,
And the voice of nightingales :
But the nightingales were mute,
Envious, when an unseen lute

Shaped the music of its chords
Into passion's thrilling words:
" Smile, Lady, smile !—I will not set
Upon my brow the coronet,
Till thou wilt gather roses white
To wear around its gems of light.
Smile, Lady, smile !—I will not see
Rivers and Hastings bend the knee,
Till those bewitching lips of thine
Will bid me rise in bliss from mine.
Smile, Lady, smile !—for who would win
A loveless throne through guilt and sin?
Or who would reign o'er vale and hill,
If woman's heart were rebel still? "

One jerk, and there a lady lay,
A lady wondrous fair;
But the rose of her lip had faded away,
And her cheek was as white and as cold as clay,
And torn was her raven hair.
" Ah ha ! " said the Fisher, in merry guise,
" Her gallant was hooked before; "
And the Abbot heaved some piteous sighs,
For oft he had blessed those deep blue eyes,
The eyes of Mistress Shore !

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he took forth a bait from his iron box.
Many the cunning sportsman tried,
Many he flung with a frown aside;
A minstrel's harp, and a miser's chest,
A hermit's cowl, and a baron's crest,
Jewels of lustre, robes of price,
Tomes of heresy, loaded dice,
And golden cups of the brightest wine
That ever was pressed from Burgundy vine.
There was a perfume of sulphur and nitre,
As he came at last to a bishop's mitre !

From top to toe the Abbot shook,
As the Fisherman armed his golden hook,
And awfully were his features wrought
By some dark stream or wakened thought.

Look how the fearful felon gazes
On the scaffold his country's vengeance raises,
When the lips are cracked and the jaws are dry
With the thirst which only in death shall die:
Mark the mariner's frenzied frown
As the swaling wherry settles down,
When peril has numbed the sense and will,
Though the hand and the foot may struggle still:
Wilder far was the Abbot's glance,
Deeper far was the Abbot's trance:
Fixed as a monument, still as air,
He bent no knee, and he breathed no prayer;
But he signed—he knew not why or how—
The sign of the Cross on his clammy brow.

There was turning of keys, and creaking of locks,
As he stalked away with his iron box.
"O ho! O ho!
The cock doth crow;
It is time for the Fisher to rise and go.
Fair luck to the Abbot, fair luck to the shrine!
He hath gnawed in twain my choicest line;
Let him swim to the north, let him swim to the south,
The Abbot will carry my hook in his mouth!"

The Abbot had preached for many years
With as clear articulation
As ever was heard in the House of Peers
Against Emancipation;
His words had made battalions quake,
Had roused the zeal of martyrs,
Had kept the Court an hour awake,
And the King himself three-quarters:
But ever from that hour, 'tis said,
He stammered and he stuttered,
As if an axe went through his head
With every word he uttered.
He stuttered o'er blessing, he stuttered o'er ban,
He stuttered drunk or dry;
And none but he and the Fisherman
Could tell the reason why!

WINTHROP MACKWORH PRAED.

THE VAGABOND

(TO AN AIR OF SCHUBERT)

GIVE to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above
And the byway nigh me.
Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river—
There's the life for a man like me,
There's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around
And the road before me.
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above
And the road below me.

Or let autumn fall on me
Where afield I linger,
Silencing the bird on tree,
Biting the blue finger.
White as meal the frosty field—
Warm the fireside haven—
Not to autumn will I yield,
Not to winter even!

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around
And the road before me.
Wealth I ask not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I ask, the heaven above
And the road below me.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

THE JOYS OF THE ROAD

Now the joys of the road are chiefly these:
A crimson touch on the hard-wood trees;

A vagrant's morning wide and blue,
In early fall, when the wind walks, too;

A shadowy highway, cool and brown,
Alluring up and enticing down

From rippled water to dappled swamp,
From purple glory to scarlet pomp;

The outward eye, the quiet will,
And the striding heart from hill to hill;

The tempter apple over the fence;
The cobweb bloom on the yellow quince;

The palish asters along the wood,—
A lyric touch of the solitude;

An open hand, an easy shoe,
And a hope to make the day go through,—

Another to sleep with, and a third
To wake me up at the voice of a bird;

The resonant far-listening morn,
And the hoarse whisper of the corn;

The crickets mourning their comrades lost,
In the night's retreat from the gathering frost;

(Or is it their slogan, plaintive and shrill,
As they beat on their corselets, valiant still?)

A hunger fit for the kings of the sea,
And a loaf of bread for Dickon and me;

A thirst like that of the Thirsty Sword
And a jug of cider on the board;

An idle noon, a bubbling spring,
The sea in the pine-tops murmuring;

A scrap of gossip at the ferry;
A comrade neither glum nor merry,

Asking nothing, revealing naught,
But minting his words from a fund of thought,

A keeper of silence eloquent,
Needy, yet royally content,

Of the mettled breed, yet abhorring strife,
And full of the mellow juice of life,

A taster of wine, with an eye for a maid,
Never too bold, and never afraid,

Never heart-whole, never heart-sick,
(These are the things I worship in Dick).

No fidget and no reformer, just
A calm observer of ought and must.

A lover of books, but a reader of man,
No cynic and no charlatan,

Who never defers and never demands,
But, smiling, takes the world in his hands,—

Seeing it good as when God first saw
And gave it the weight of his will for law.

And O the joy that is never won,
But follows and follows the journeying sun,

By marsh and tide, by meadow and stream,
A will-o'-the-wind, a light-o'-dream,

The racy smell of the forest loam,
When the stealthy, sad-heart leaves go home;

The broad gold wake of the afternoon;
The silent fleck of the cold new moon;

The sound of the hollow sea's release
From the stormy tumult to starry peace;

With only another league to wend;
And two brown arms at the journey's end!

These are the joys of the open road—
For him who travels without a load.

W. Bliss Carman.

THE LADIES OF ST JAMES'S

A PROPER NEW BALLAD OF THE COUNTRY AND THE TOWN

Phyllida amo ante alias.—Virgil

The ladies of St. James's
Go swinging to the play;
Their footmen run before them,
With a "Stand by! Clear the way!"
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
She takes her buckled shoon,
When we go out a-courting
Beneath the harvest moon.

The ladies of St. James's
Wear satin on their backs;
They sit all night at *Ombre*,
With candles all of wax:
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
She dons her russet gown,
And runs to gather May dew
Before the world is down.

The ladies of St. James's!
They are so fine and fair,

You'd think a box of essence
  Was broken in the air :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
  The breath of heath and furze,
When breezes blow at morning,
  Is not so fresh as hers.

The ladies of St James's !
  They're painted to the eyes;
Their white it stays for ever,
  Their red it never dies :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
  Her colour comes and goes;
It trembles to a lily,—
  It wavers to a rose.

The ladies of St James's !
  You scarce can understand
The half of all their speeches,
  Their phrases are so grand :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
  Her shy and simple words
Are clear as after rain-drops
  The music of the birds.

The ladies of St James's !
  They have their fits and freaks;
They smile on you—for seconds;
  They frown on you—for weeks :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
  Come either storm or shine,
From Shrove-tide unto Shrove-tide,
  Is always true—and mine.

My Phyllida ! my Phyllida !
  I care not though they heap
The hearts of all St James's,
  And give me all to keep;

I care not whose the beauties
Of all the world may be,
For Phyllida,—for Phyllida
Is all the world to me!

AUSTIN DOBSON.

SRÁHMANDÁZI

DEEP embowered beside the forest river,
Where the flame of sunset only falls,
Lapped in silence lies the House of Dying,
House of them to whom the twilight calls.

There within when day was near to ending,
By her lord a woman young and strong,
By his chief a songman old and stricken
Watched together till the hour of song.

"O my songman, now the bow is broken,
Now the arrows one by one are sped,
Sing to me the Song of Sráhmandázi,
Sráhmandázi, home of all the dead."

Then the songman, flinging wide his songnet,
On the last token laid his master's hand,
While he sang the song of Sráhmandázi,
None but dying men can understand.

"Yonder sun that fierce and fiery-hearted
Marches down the sky to vanish soon,
At the self-same hour in Sráhmandázi
Rises pallid like the rainy moon.

"There he sees the heroes by their river,
Where the great fish daily upward swim;
Yet they are but shadows hunting shadows,
Phantom fish in waters drear and dim.

"There he sees the Kings among their headmen,
Women weaving, children playing games;
Yet they are but shadows ruling shadows,
Phantom folk with dim forgotten names.

" Bid farewell to all that most thou lovest,
Tell thy heart thy living life is done;
All the days and deeds of Sráhmandázi
Are not worth an hour of yonder sun."

Dreamily the chief from out the songnet
Drew his hand and touched the woman's head:
" Know they not, then, love in Sráhmandázi?
Has a King no bride among the dead? "

Then the songman answered, " O my master,
Love they know, but none may learn it there;
Only souls that reach that land together
Keep their troth and find the twilight fair.

" Thou art still a King, and at thy passing
By thy latest word must all abide:
If thou willest, here am I, thy songman;
If thou lovest, here is she, thy bride."

Hushed and dreamy lay the House of Dying,
Dreamily the sunlight upward failed,
Dreamily the chief on eyes that loved him
Looked with eyes the coming twilight veiled.

Then he cried, " My songman, I am passing;
Let her live, her life is but begun;
All the days and nights of Sráhmandázi
Are not worth an hour of yonder sun."

Yet, when there within the House of Dying
The last silence held the sunset air,
Not alone he came to Sráhmandázi,
Not alone she found the twilight fair:

While the songman, far beneath the forest
Sang of Sráhmandázi all night through,
" Lovely be thy name, O Land of Shadows,
Land of meeting, land of all the true! "

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT.

SAM'S THREE WISHES:

OR LIFE'S LITTLE WHIRLIGIG

" I'm thinking and thinking," said old Sam Shore,
" 'Twere somebody *knocking* I heard at the door."

From the clock popped the cuckoo and cuckooed out eight,
As there in his chair he wondering sate . . .
" There's no one I knows on would come so late,
A-clicking the latch of an empty house
With nobbut inside 'un but me and a mouse . . .
Maybe a-waking in sleep I be,
And 'twere out of a dream came that tapping to me."
At length he cautiously rose and went,
And with thumb upon latch awhile listening bent,
Then slowly drew open the door. And behold!
There stood a Fairy!—all green and gold,
Mantled up warm against dark and cold,
And smiling up into his candle shine,
Lips like wax, and cheeks like wine,
As saucy and winsome a thing to see
As are linden buds on a linden tree.

Stock-still in the doorway stood simple Sam
A-ducking his head, with " Good-e'en to 'ee, Ma'am."
Dame Fairy she nods, and cries clear and sweet,
" 'Tis a *very* good-e'en, sir, when such folks meet.
I know thee, Sam, though thou wist not of me,
And I'm come in late gloaming to speak with thee;
Though my eyes do dazzle at glint of your rush,
All under this pretty green fuchsia bush."

Sam ducked once more, smiling simple and slow.
Like the warbling of birds her words did flow,
And she laughed, very merry, to see how true
Shone the old man's kindness his courtesy through.
And she nodded her head, and the stars on high
Sparkled down on her smallness from out of the sky.

" A friend is a friend, Sam, and wonderful pleasant,
And I'm come for old sake's sake to bring thee a present.
Three wishes, three wishes are thine, Sam Shore.
Just three wishes—and wish no more,
All for because, ruby-ripe to see,
The pixy-pears burn in yon hawthorn tree,
And your old milch cow, wheresoever she goes,
Never crops over the fairy-knowes.
Ay, Sam, thou art old and thy house is lone,
But there's Potencies round thee, and here is one ! "

Poor Sam, he stared : and the stars o'erhead
A shimmering light on the elm-tops shed.
Like rilling of water her voice rang sweet,
And the night-wind sighed at the sound of it.

He frowned—glanced back at the empty grate,
And shook very slowly his grey old pate :
" Three wishes, my dear ! Why, I scarcely knows
Which be my crany and which my toes !
But I thank 'ee, Ma'am, kindly, and this I'd say,
That the night of your passing is Michaelmas Day;
And if it were company come on a sudden,
Why, I'd ax for a fat goose to fry in the oven ! "

And lo, and forsooth ! as the words he was uttering,
A rich puff of air set his candle a-guttering,
And there rose in the kitchen a sizzling and sputtering,
With a crackling of sparks and of flames a great fluttering,
And—of which there could not be two opinions—
A smoking-hot savour of sage and onions.
Beam, wall and flagstones the kitchen was lit,
Every dark corner and cranny of it,
With the blaze from the hearthstone. Copper and brass
Winked back the winking of platter and glass.
And a wonderful squeaking of mice went up
At the smell of a Michaelmas supper to sup—

Unctuous odours that wreathed and swirled
Where'er frisked a whisker or mouse-tail twirled,
While out of the chimney up into the night
That ne'er-to-be-snuffed-too-much smoke took flight.

" That's one," says the Fairy, finger on thumb,
" So now, Mister Sam, there's but two to come ! "
She leaned her head sidelong; she lifted her chin,
With a twinkling of eye from the radiance within.
Poor Sam stood stounded; he says, says he,
" I *wish* my old Mother was back with me,
For if there was one thing she couldn't refuse,
'Twas a sweet thick slice from the breast of a goose."
But his cheek grew stiff and his eyes stared bright,
For there, on her stick, pushing out of the night,
Tap-tapping along, herself and no other,
Came who but the shape of his dear old Mother !
Straight into the kitchen she hastened and went,
Her breath coming quick as if all but spent,
" Why, Sam," says she, " the bird be turning,
For my nose tells I that the skin's a-burning ! "
And down at the oven the ghost of her sat
And basted the goose with the boiling fat.

" Oho," cries the Fairy, sweet and small,
" Another wish gone will leave nothing at all."
And Sam sighs, " Bless'ee, Ma'am, keep the other,
There's nowt that I want now I have my Mother."

But the Fairy laughs softly, and says, says she,
" There's one wish left, Sam; I promised 'ee three.
Hasten your wits, the hour creeps on,
There's calling afield and I'm soon to be gone.
Soon as haps midnight the cocks will crow,
And me to the gathering and feasting must go."

Sam gazed at his Mother—withered and wan,
The rose in her cheek, her bright hair, gone,
And her poor old back bent double with years—
And he scarce could speak for the salt, salt tears.

" Well, well," he says, " I'm unspeakable glad :
But—it bain't quite the same as when I was a lad.
There's joy and there's joy, Ma'am, but to tell 'ee
the truth
There's none can compare with the joy of one's youth.
And if it was possible, how could I choose
But be back in boy's breeches to eat the goose;
And all the old things, and my Mother the most,
To shine again real as my own gatepost !
What wouldn't I give, too, to see again wag
The dumpity tail of my old dog, Shag !
Your kindness, Ma'am, but all wishing was vain
Unless us can both be young again."
A shrill faint laughter from nowhere came. . . .
Empty the dark in the candle-flame. . . .

And there stood our Sam, about four foot high,
Snub nose, shock hair, and round blue eye.
Breeches and braces and coat of him too,
Shirt on his back, and each clodhopping shoe
Had shrunk to a nicety—button and hem
To fit the small Sammie tucked up into them.

There was his Mother, too, smooth, clear cheek,
Lips as sooth as a blackbird's beak;
Pretty arched eyebrows, the daintiest nose—
While the smoke of the baking deliciously rose.

" Come, Sammie," she cries, " your old Mammikin's
joy,
Climb up on your stool, supper's ready, my boy.
Bring in the candle, and shut out the night;
There's goose, baked 'taties and cabbage to bite.
Why, bless the wee lamb, he's all shiver and shake,
And you'd think from the look of him scarcely
awake !
If 'ee glour wi' those eyes, Sam, so dark and round,
The elves will away with 'ee, I'll be bound ! "

So Sam and his Mother by wishes three
Were made just as happy as happy can be.

And there—with a bumpity tail to wag—
Sat laughing with tongue out, their old dog, Shag.
To clatter of platter, bones, giblets and juice,
Between them they ate up the whole of the goose.

But time is a river for ever in flow,
The weeks went by as the weeks must go;
Soon fifty-two to a year did grow.
The long years passed, one after another,
Making older and older our Sam and his Mother;
And, alas and alack, with nine of them gone,
Poor Shag lay asleep again under a stone.
And a sorrowful dread would sometimes creep
Into Sam's dreams, as he lay asleep,
That his Mother was lost, and away he'd fare,
Calling her, calling her, everywhere,
In dark, in rain, by roads unknown,
Under echoing hills, and alone, alone,
What bliss in the morning to wake and see
The sun shining green in the linden tree,
And out of that dream's dark shadowiness
To slip in on his Mother and give her a kiss,
Then go whistling off in the dew to hear
The thrushes all mocking him, sweet and clear.

Still, moon after moon from heaven above
Shone on Mother and son, and made light of love.
Her roses faded, her pretty brown hair
Had sorrowful grey in it everywhere.
And at last she died, and was laid to rest,
Her tired hands crossed on her shrunken breast.
And Sam, now lonely, lived on and on
Till most of his workaday life seemed gone.

Yet spring came again, with its green and blue,
And presently summer's wild roses too,
Pinks, Sweet-William, and sops-in-wine,
Blackberry, lavender, eglantine.
And when these had blossomed and gone their way,
'Twas apples and daisies and Michaelmas Day—

Yes, spider-webs, dew, and haws in the may,
And seraphs singing in Michaelmas Day.

Sam worked all morning and *couldn't* get rest
For a kind of a feeling of grief in his breast.
And yet, not grief, but something more
Like the thought that what happens has happened before.
He fed the chickens, he fed the sow,
On a three-legged stool sate down to the cow,
With a pail 'twixt his legs in the green in the meadow,
Under the elm trees' lengthening shadow;
And woke at last with a smile and a sigh
To find he had milked his poor Jingo dry.

As dusk set in, even the birds did seem
To be calling and calling from out of a dream.
He chopped up kindling, shut up his shed,
In a bucket of well-water soused his head
To freshen his eyes up a little and make
The drowsy old wits of him wider awake.
As neat as a womanless creature is able
He swept up his hearthstone and laid the table.
And then o'er his platter and mug, if you please,
Sate gloomily gooming at loaf and cheese—
Gooming and gooming as if the mere sight
Of his victuals could satisfy appetite!
And the longer and longer he looked at them
The slimmer slimmed upward his candle flame,
Blue in the air. And when squeaked a mouse,
'Twas loud as a trump in the hush of the house.
Then, sudden, a soft little wind puffed by,
'Twixt the thick-thatched roof and the star-sown sky;
And died. And then
That deep, dead, wonderful silence again.

Then—soft as a rattle a-counting her seeds
In the midst of a tangle of withered-up weeds—
Came a faint, faint knocking, a rustle like silk,
And a breath at the keyhole as soft as milk—

Still as the flit of a moth. And then. . . .
That infinitesimal knocking again.

Sam lifted his chin from his fists. He listened.
His wandering eyes in the candle glistened.
Then slowly, slowly, rolled round by degrees—
And there sat a mouse on the top of his cheese.
He stared at this Midget, and it at him,
Over the edge of his mug's round rim,
And—as if it were Christian—he says, " Did 'ee hear
A faint little tap-tap-tap-tapping, my dear?

" You was at supper and me in a maze;
'Tis dark for a caller in these lone days,
There's nowt in the larder. We're both of us old,
And all of my loved ones sleep under the mould,
And yet—and yet—as I've told 'ee before . . ."

But if Sam's story you'd read to the end,
Turn back to page one, and press onward, dear friend;
Yes, if you would stave the last note of this song,
Turn back to page primus, and warble along!
For all sober records of life (come to write 'em)
Are bound to continue—well, ad infinitum.

Walter de la Mare.

TRULY GREAT

My walls outside must have some flowers,
  My walls within must have some books;
A house that's small; a garden large,
  And in it leafy nooks:

A little gold that's sure each week;
  That comes not from my living kind,
But from a dead man in his grave,
  Who cannot change his mind:

A lovely wife, and gentle too;
  Contented that no eyes but mine
Can see her many charms, nor voice
  To call her beauty fine:

Where she would in that stone cage live,
  A self-made prisoner with me;
While many a wild bird sang around,
  On gate, on bush, on tree:

And she sometimes to answer them,
  In her far sweeter voice than all;
Till birds, that loved to look on leaves,
  Will dote on a stone wall.

—With this small house, this garden large,
  This little gold, this lovely mate,
With health in body, peace at heart—
  Show me a man more great.

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES.

"A WEARY LOT IS THINE, FAIR MAID"

A WEARY lot is thine, fair maid,
  A weary lot is thine!
To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
  And press the rue for wine.
A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien
  A feather of the blue,
A doublet of the Lincoln green—
  No more of me you knew
    My Love!
No more of me you knew.

"This morn is merry June, I trow,
  The rose is budding fain;
But she shall bloom in winter snow
  Ere we two meet again."

He turn'd his charger as he spake
Upon the river shore,
He gave the bridle-reins a shake
Said "Adieu for evermore
My Love!
And adieu for evermore."

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

"EARL MARCH LOOK'D ON HIS DYING CHILD"

EARL MARCH look'd on his dying child,
And, smit with grief to view her—
The youth, he cried, whom I exiled
Shall be restored to woo her.

She's at the window many an hour
His coming to discover:
And he look'd up to Ellen's bower
And she look'd on her lover—

But ah! so pale, he knew her not,
Though her smile on him was dwelling—
And am I then forgot—forgot?
It broke the heart of Ellen.

In vain he weeps, in vain he sighs,
Her cheek is cold as ashes;
Nor love's own kiss shall wake those eyes
To lift their silken lashes.

T. CAMPBELL.

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME"

I

MY first thought was, he lied in every word,
That hoary cripple, with malicious eye
Askance to watch the working of his lie

On mine, and mouth scarce able to afford
Suppression of the glee that pursed and scored
Its edge at one more victim gained thereby.

II

What else should he be set for, with his staff?
What, save to waylay with his lies, ensnare
All travellers that might find him posted there,
And ask the road? I guessed what skull-like laugh
Would break, what crutch 'gin write my epitaph
For pastime in the dusty thoroughfare,

III

If at his counsel I should turn aside
Into that ominous tract which, all agree,
Hides the Dark Tower. Yet acquiescingly
I did turn as he pointed; neither pride
Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,
So much as gladness that some end might be.

IV

For, what with my whole world-wide wandering,
What with my search drawn out thro' years, my hope
Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope
With that obstreperous joy success would bring,—
I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring
My heart made, finding failure in its scope.

V

As when a sick man very near to death
Seems dead indeed, and feels begin and end
The tears and takes the farewell of each friend,
And hears one bid the other go, draw breath
Freelier outside, (" since all is o'er," he saith,
" And the blow fall'n no grieving can amend; ")

VI

While some discuss if near the other graves
Be room enough for this, and when a day
Suits best for carrying the corpse away,
With care about the banners, scarves and staves,
And still the man hears all, and only craves
He may not shame such tender love and stay.

VII

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest,
Heard failure prophesied so oft, been writ
So many times among " The Band "—to wit,
The knights who to the Dark Tower's search addressed
Their steps—that just to fail as they, seemed best,
And all the doubt was now—should I be fit.

VIII

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him,
That hateful cripple, out of his highway
Into the path he pointed. All the day
Had been a dreary one at best, and dim
Was settling to its close, yet shot one grim
Red leer to see the plain catch its estray.

IX

For mark ! no sooner was I fairly found
Pledged to the plain, after a pace or two,
Than pausing to throw backward a last view
O'er the safe road, 'twas gone ! grey plain all round :
Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.
I might go on ; nought else remained to do.

X

So on I went. I think I never saw
Such starved ignoble nature ; nothing throve :
For flowers—as well expect a cedar grove !
But cockle, spurge, according to their law
Might propagate their kind, with none to awe,
You'd think ; a burr had been a treasure-trove.

XI

No ! penury, inertness, and grimace,
In some strange sort, were the land's portion. " See
Or shut your eyes "—said Nature peevishly—
" It nothing skills : I cannot help my case :
'Tis the Last Judgment's fire must cure this place,
Calcine its clods and set my prisoners free."

XII

If there pushed any ragged thistle-stalk
Above its mates, the head was chopped—the bents
Were jealous else. What made those holes and rents
In the dock's harsh swarth leaves—bruised as to baulk
All hope of greenness ? 'tis a brute must walk
Pashing their life out, with a brute's intents.

XIII

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair
In leprosy—thin dry blades pricked the mud
Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood.
One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,
Stood stupefied, however he came there—
Thrust out past service from the devil's stud !

XIV

Alive ? he might be dead for aught I know,
With that red gaunt and colloped neck a-strain,
And shut eyes underneath the rusty mane.
Seldom went such grotesqueness with such woe :
I never saw a brute I hated so—
He must be wicked to deserve such pain.

XV

I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart.
As a man calls for wine before he fights,
I asked one draught of earlier, happier sights
Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.
Think first, fight afterwards—the soldier's art :
One taste of the old times sets all to rights !

XVI

Not it! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening face
Beneath its garniture of curly gold,
Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold
An arm in mine to fix me to the place,
That way he used. Alas! one night's disgrace!
Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

XVII

Giles, then, the soul of honour—there he stands
Frank as ten years ago when knighted first.
What honest man should dare (he said) he durst.
Good—but the scene shifts—faugh! what hangman hands
Pin to his breast a parchment? his own bands
Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon and curst!

XVIII

Better this present than a past like that—
Back therefore to my darkening path again.
No sound, no sight as far as eye could strain.
Will the night send a howlet or a bat?
I asked: when something on the dismal flat
Came to arrest my thoughts and change their train.

XIX

A sudden little river crossed my path
As unexpected as a serpent comes.
No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms—
This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath
For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see the wrath
Of its black eddy bespate with flakes and spumes.

XX

So petty yet so spiteful! all along,
Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;
Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit
Of mute despair, a suicidal throng:
The river which had done them all the wrong,
Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

XXI

Which, while I forded,—good saints, how I feared
To set my foot upon a dead man's cheek,
Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek
For hollows, tangled in his hair or beard!
—It may have been a water-rat I speared,
But, ugh; it sounded like a baby's shriek.

XXII

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.
Now for a better country. Vain presage!
Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage
Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank
Soil to a plash? toads in a poisoned tank,
Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage—

XXIII

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.
What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?
No foot-print leading to that horrid mews,
None out of it. Mad brewage set to work
Their brains, no doubt, like galley-slaves the Turk
Pits for his pastime, Christians against Jews.

XXIV

And more than that—a furlong on—why, there!
What bad use was that engine for, that wheel,
Or brake, not wheel—that harrow fit to reel
Men's bodies out like silk? with all the air
Of Tophet's tool, on earth left unaware,
Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth of steel.

XXV

Then came a bit of stubbed ground, once a wood,
Next a marsh, it would seem, and now mere earth
Desperate and done with; (so a fool finds mirth,
Makes a thing and then mars it, till his mood
Changes and off he goes!) within a rood—
Bog, clay and rubble, sand and stark black dearth

XXVI

Now blotches rankling, coloured gay and grim,
Now patches where some leanness of the soil's
Broke into moss or substances like boils;
Then came some palsied oak, a cleft in him
Like a distorted mouth that splits its rim
Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils.

XXVII

And just as far as ever from the end!
Nought in the distance but the evening, nought
To point my footstep further! At the thought,
A great black bird, Apollyon's bosom-friend,
Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing dragon-penned
That brushed my cap—perchance the guide I sought.

XXVIII

For looking up, aware I somehow grew,
'Spite of the dusk, the plain had given place
All round to mountains—with such name to grace
Mere ugly heights and heaps now stolen in view.
How thus they had surprised me,—solve it, you!
How to get from them was no clearer case.

XXIX

Yet half I seemed to recognise some trick
Of mischief happened to me, God knows when—
In a bad dream perhaps. Here ended, then,
Progress this way. When, in the very nick
Of giving up, one time more, came a click
As when a trap shuts—you're inside the den!

XXX

Burningly it came on me all at once,
This was the place! those two hills on the right
Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight—
While to the left, a tall scalped mountain . . . Dunce,
Dotard a-dozing at the very nonce,
After a life spent training for the sight!

XXXI

What in the midst lay but the Tower itself?
The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart,
Built of brown stone, without a counterpart
In the whole world. The tempest's mocking elf
Points to the shipman thus the unseen shelf
He strikes on, only when the timbers start.

XXXII

Not see? because of night perhaps?—Why, day
Came back again for that! before it left,
The dying sunset kindled through a cleft:
The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay—
Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay,—
"Now stab and end the creature—to the heft!"

XXXIII

Not hear? when noise was everywhere? it tolled
Increasing like a bell. Names in my ears,
Of all the lost adventurers my peers,—
How such a one was strong, and such was bold,
And such was fortunate, yet each of old
Lost, lost! one moment knelled the woe of years.

XXXIV

There they stood, ranged along the hill-sides—met
To view the last of me, a living frame
For one more picture; in a sheet of flame
I saw them and I knew them all. And yet
Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set
And blew. "*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came.*"

ROBERT BROWNING.

DOG

You little friend, your nose is ready; you sniff
Asking for that expected walk,
(Your nostrils full of the happy rabbit-whiff)
And almost talk.

And so the moment becomes a moving force :
Coats glide from their pegs in the humble dark ;
The sticks grow live to the stride of their vagrant course.
You scamper the stairs,
Your body informed with the scent and the track and the mark
Of stoats and weasels, moles and badgers and hares.

We are going *out*. You know the pitch of the word,
Probing the tone of thought as it comes through fog
And reaches by devious means (half-smelt, half-heard)
The four-legged brain of a walk-intensive dog.

Out in the garden your head is already low.
(Can you smell the rose? Ah, no.)
But your limbs can draw
Life from the earth through the touch of your padded paw.

Now, sending a little look to us behind,
Who follow slowly the track of your lovely play,
You carry our bodies forward away from mind
Into the light and fun of your useless day.

. . . . . .

Thus, for your walk, we took ourselves, and went
Out by the hedge and the tree and on to the green.
You ran, in delightful strata of wafted scent,
Over the hill without seeing the view ;
Beauty is smell upon primitive smell to you :
To you, as to us, it is distant and rarely seen.

Home . . . and further joy will be surely there :
Supper waiting full of the taste of bone.
You throw up your nose again, and sniff, and stare
For the habit known
Of the quick wild gorge of food and the still lie-down,
While your people talk above you in the light
Of candles, and your dreams will merge and drown
Into the bed-delicious hours of night.

HAROLD MONRO.

CORONACH

He is gone on the mountain,
  He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
  When our need was the sorest.
The font reappearing
  From the raindrops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
  To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
  Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
  Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
  Waft the leaves that are serest,
But our flower was in flushing
  When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,
  Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
  How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
  Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
  Thou art gone, and for ever!

Sir Walter Scott.

PRE-EXISTENCE

I laid me down upon the shore
  And dreamed a little space:
I heard the great waves break and roar;
  The sun was on my face.

My idle hands and fingers brown
  Played with the pebbles grey;
The waves came up, the waves went down,
  Most thundering and gay.

The pebbles they were smooth and round
And warm upon my hands,
Like little people I had found
Sitting among the sands.

The grains of sand so shining-small
Soft through my fingers ran;
The sun shone down upon it all,
And so my dream began;

How all of this had been before;
How ages far away
I lay on some forgotten shore
As here I lie to-day.

The waves came shining up the sands,
As here to-day they shine;
And in my pre-pelasgian hands
The sand was warm and fine.

I have forgotten whence I came
Or what my home might be,
Or by what strange and savage name
I called that thundering sea.

I only know the sun shone down
As still it shines to-day,
And in my fingers long and brown
The little pebbles lay.

FRANCES CORNFORD.

GOBLIN MARKET

MORNING and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpecked cherries,

Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries;—
All ripe together
In summer weather,—
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy:
Our grapes fresh from the vine,
Pomegranates full and fine,
Dates and sharp bullaces,
Rare pears and greengages,
Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try:
Currants and gooseberries,
Bright-fire-like barberries,
Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;
Come buy, come buy."

Evening by evening
Among the brookside rushes,
Laura bowed her head to hear,
Lizzie veiled her blushes:
Crouching close together
In the cooling weather,
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.
"Lie close," Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head:
"We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry, thirsty roots?"

" Come buy," call the goblins
Hobbling down the glen.
" Oh," cried Lizzie, " Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men."
Lizzie covered up her eyes,
Covered close lest they should look;
Laura reared her glossy head,
And whispered like the restless brook:
" Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate,
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds weight.
How fair the vine must grow
Whose grapes are so luscious;
How warm the wind must blow
Through those fruit bushes."
" No," said Lizzie: " No, no, no;
Their offers should not charm us,
Their evil gifts would harm us."
She thrust a dimpled finger
In each ear, shut eyes and ran:
Curious Laura chose to linger
Wondering at each merchant man.
One had a cat's face,
One whisked a tail,
One tramped at a rat's pace,
One crawled like a snail,
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.
She heard a voice like voice of doves
Cooing all together:
They sounded kind and full of loves
In the pleasant weather.

Laura stretched her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,

Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen
Turned and trooped the goblin men,
With their shrill repeated cry,
" Come buy, come buy."
When they reached where Laura was
They stood stock still upon the moss,
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother;
Signalling each other,
Brother with sly brother.
One set his basket down,
One reared his plate;
One began to weave a crown
Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown
(Men sell not such in any town);
One heaved the golden weight
Of dish and fruit to offer her:
" Come buy, come buy," was still their cry.
Laura stared but did not stir,
Longed but had no money:
The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste
In tones as smooth as honey,
The cat-faced purr'd,
The rat-paced spoke a word
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;
One parrot-voiced and jolly
Cried " Pretty Goblin " still for " Pretty Polly;"—
One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:
" Good folk, I have no coin;
To take were to purloin:
I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze

That shakes in windy weather
Above the rusty heather."
"You have much gold upon your head,"
They answered all together:
"Buy from us with a golden curl."
She clipped a precious golden lock,
She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,
Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red:
Sweeter than honey from the rock,
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,
Clearer than water flowed that juice;
She never tasted such before,
How should it cloy with length of use?
She sucked and sucked and sucked the more
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;
She sucked until her lips were sore;
Then flung the emptied rinds away
But gathered up one kernel stone,
And knew not was it night or day
As she turned home alone.

Lizzie met her at the gate
Full of wise upbraidings:
"Dear, you should not stay so late,
Twilight is not good for maidens;
Should not loiter in the glen
In the haunts of goblin men.
Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Took their gifts both choice and many,
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers
Plucked from bowers
Where summer ripens at all hours?
But ever in the noonlight
She pined and pined away;
Sought them by night and day,
Found them no more, but dwindled and grew grey;
Then fell with the first snow,
While to this day no grass will grow

Where she lies low :
I planted daisies there a year ago
That never blow.
You should not loiter so."
" Nay, hush," said Laura :
" Nay, hush, my sister :
I ate and ate my fill,
Yet my mouth waters still ;
To-morrow night I will
Buy more : " and kissed her :
" Have done with sorrow ;
I'll bring you plums to-morrow
Fresh on their mother twigs,
Cherries worth getting ;
You cannot think what figs
My teeth have met in,
What melons icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
Too huge for me to hold,
What peaches with a velvet nap,
Pellucid grapes without one seed :
Odorous indeed must be the mead
Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink
With lilies at the brink,
And sugar-sweet their sap."

Golden head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other's wings,
They lay down in their curtained bed :
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,
Like two wands of ivory
Tipped with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gazed in at them,
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forbore to fly,
Not a bat flapped to and fro
Round their nest :

Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest.

Early in the morning
When the first cock crowed his warning,
Neat likes bees, as sweet and busy,
Laura rose with Lizzie :
Fetched in honey, milked the cows,
Aired and set to rights the house,
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,
Next churned butter, whipped up cream,
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;
Talked as modest maidens should :
Lizzie with an open heart,
Laura in an absent dream,
One content, one sick in part;
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,
One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came :
They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;
Lizzie most placid in her look,
Laura most like a leaping flame.
They drew the gurgling water from its deep;
Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags,
Then turning homewards said : " The sunset flushes
Those furthest loftiest crags;
Come, Laura, not another maiden lags,
No wilful squirrel wags,
The beasts and birds are fast asleep."
But Laura loitered still among the rushes
And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still,
The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill :
Listening ever, but not catching
The customary cry,
" Come buy, come buy,"

With its iterated jingle
Of sugar-baited words :
Not for all her watching
Once discerning even one goblin
Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;
Let alone the herds
That used to tramp along the glen,
In groups or single,
Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, " O Laura, come;
I hear the fruit call but I dare not look :
You should not loiter longer at this brook :
Come with me home.
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,
Each glowworm winks her spark,
Let us get home before the night grows dark :
For clouds may gather
Though this is summer weather,
Put out the lights and drench us through;
Then if we lost our way what should we do? "

Laura turned cold as stone
To find her sister heard that cry alone,
That goblin cry,
" Come buy our fruits, come buy."
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?
Must she no more such succous pasture find,
Gone deaf and blind?
Her tree of life drooped from the root :
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;
But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,
Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way;
So crept to bed, and lay
Silent till Lizzie slept;
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
And gnashed her teeth for baulked desire, and wept
As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,
Laura kept watch in vain
In sullen silence of exceeding pain.
She never caught again the goblin cry:
"Come buy, come buy."—
She never spied the goblin men
Hawking their fruits along the glen;
But when the noon waxed bright
Her hair grew thin and grey;
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn
To swift decay and burn
Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone
She set it by a wall that faced the south;
Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,
Watched for a waxing shoot,
But there came none;
It never saw the sun,
It never felt the trickling moisture run:
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth
She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees
False waves in desert drouth
With shade of leaf-crowned trees,
And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,
Tended the fowls or cows,
Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
Brought water from the brook:
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear
To watch her sister's cankerous care
Yet not to share.
She night and morning
Caught the goblins' cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy."—

Beside the brook, along the glen,
She heard the tramp of goblin men,
The voice and stir
Poor Laura could not hear;
Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,
But feared to pay too dear.
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;
But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest winter time,
With the first glazing rime,
With the first snow-fall of crisp winter time.

Till Laura dwindling
Seemed knocking at Death's door:
Then Lizzie weighed no more
Better and worse;
But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook:
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look.

Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel- and wombat-like,

Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter skelter, hurry skurry,
Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes,—
Hugged her and kissed her:
Squeezed and caressed her:
Stretched up their dishes,
Panniers, and plates:
"Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red with basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs;
Pluck them and suck them,
Pomegranates, figs."—

"Good folk," said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie:
"Give me much and many:"—
Held out her apron,
Tossed them her penny.
"Nay, take a seat with us,
Honour and eat with us,"
They answered grinning:
"Our feast is but beginning.
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry:
Such fruits as these
No man can carry;
Half their bloom would fly,
Half their dew would dry,
Half their flavour would pass by.

Sit down and feast with us,
Be welcome guest with us,
Cheer you and rest with us."—
" Thank you," said Lizzie : " But one waits
At home alone for me :
So without further parleying,
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I tossed you for a fee."—
They began to scratch their pates,
No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.
One called her proud,
Cross-grained, uncivil;
Their tones waxed loud,
Their looks were evil.
Lashing their tails
They trod and hustled her,
Elbowed and jostled her,
Clawed with their nails,
Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,
Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,
Twitched her hair out by the roots,
Stamped upon her tender feet,
Held her hands and squeezed their fruits
Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,—
Like a rock of blue-veined stone
Lashed by tides obstreperously,—
Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire,—
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree
White with blossoms honey-sweet
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—

Like a royal virgin town
Topped with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguered by a fleet
Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,
Twenty cannot make him drink.
Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,
Coaxed and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,
Kicked and knocked her,
Mauled and mocked her,
Lizzie uttered not a word;
Would not open lip from lip
Lest they should cram a mouthful in:
But laughed in heart to feel the drip
Of juice that syrupped all her face,
And lodged in dimples of her chin,
And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.
At last the evil people
Worn out by her resistance
Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit
Along whichever road they took,
Not leaving root or stone or shoot;
Some writhed into the ground,
Some dived into the brook
With ring and ripple,
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,
Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle,
Lizzie went her way;
Knew not was it night or day;
Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze,
Threaded copse and dingle,
And heard her penny jingle
Bouncing in her purse,—
Its bounce was music to her ear.

She ran and ran
As if she feared some goblin man
Dogged her with gibe or curse
Or something worse:
But not one goblin skurried after,
Nor was she pricked by fear;
The kind heart made her windy-paced
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste
And inward laughter.

She cried "Laura," up the garden,
"Did you miss me?
Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me:
For your sake I have braved the glen
And had to do with goblin merchant men."

Laura started from her chair,
Flung her arms up in the air,
Clutched her hair:
"Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
For my sake the fruit forbidden?
Must your light like mine be hidden,
Your young life like mine be wasted,
Undone in mine undoing
And ruined in my ruin,
Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?"—
She clung about her sister,
Kissed and kissed and kissed her:
Tears once again
Refreshed her shrunken eyes,
Dropping like rain
After long sultry drouth;
Shaking with aguish fear, and pain,
She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,
She loathed the feast :
Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung,
Rent all her robe, and wrung
Her hands in lamentable haste,
And beat her breast.
Her locks streamed like the torch
Borne by a racer at full speed,
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,
Or like an eagle when she stems the light
Straight toward the sun,
Or like a caged thing freed,
Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her heart,
Met the fire mouldering there
And overbore its lesser flame ;
She gorged on bitterness without a name :
Ah ! fool, to choose such part
Of soul-consuming care !
Sense failed in the mortal strife :
Like the watch-tower of a town
Which an earthquake shatters down,
Like a lightning-stricken mast,
Like a wind-uprooted tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topped waterspout
Cast down headlong in the sea,
She fell at last ;
Pleasure past and anguish past,
Is it death or is it life ?

Life out of death.
That night long Lizzie watched by her,
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,
Felt for her breath,
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face
With tears and fanning leaves :
But when the first birds chirped about their eaves,

And early reapers plodded to the place
Of golden sheaves,
And dew-wet grass
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,
And new buds with new day
Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,
Laura awoke as from a dream,
Laughed in the innocent old way,
Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice;
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of grey,
Her breath was sweet as May
And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, when both were wives
With children of their own;
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,
Their lives bound up in tender lives;
Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,
Those pleasant days long gone
Of not-returning time:
Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,
Their fruits like honey to the throat
But poison in the blood
(Men sell not such in any town):
Would tell them how her sister stood
In deadly peril to do her good,
And win the fiery antidote:
Then joining hands to little hands
Would bid them cling together,
"For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

NOTES

PART I

THE BALLAD

THE ballad has been defined as a story told in song. Frequently, however, especially in the older ballads, the story is suggested rather than told. The main characteristics of this kind of poetry are the refrain and the repetitions of words, phrases and lines. The story is rapidly told, emphasis being laid on the main incidents while the transitional parts are frequently omitted altogether. Very often the course of events is suggested through dialogue, in which case the usual " he said," " she replied," etc., are constantly omitted. This gives many of the ballads a dramatic effect. Some of these peculiarities are explained by the origin and growth of ballad poetry. Many critics think that ballads originated in the very early ages amongst the simple, unlettered folk, one of whose amusements was the dance-song, probably under the direction of one of their own number. As they danced they sang about some event which had happened in their locality or which had been reported to them. Other critics believe that ballads were made and sung in the first instance by travelling minstrels. However the ballads originated, they were certainly transmitted by the " people," that is, when once learned, they were passed along orally from one generation to another, and this process went on for centuries. Many old people are still living who can recall whole ballads, or snatches of ballads, which were sung to them in childhood, —people who have never seen a ballad in print. If we look upon the ballad as the peculiar property of the simple, unlearned folk, we can understand, for example, why ballads have so much repetition. The refrain, again, points unmistakably to the time when ballads were sung by a throng. Further, many ballads found in widely separated parts of the world tell the same story while they differ from one another in details. This fact is easily accounted for by considering that in the process of transmission changes would be introduced owing to deficiencies of memory, or the desire on the part of the transmitter to change parts of the story to suit local taste or conditions.

Ballads are not all of the same age. The older ones, *Lord Randal*, for instance, are simpler in plot, more vague as to time and place, and less decorated with poetic ornament than those of later date. Their chief charm lies in their simplicity and directness. Later ballads tend to be longer, more attention being paid to the introduction, the transitions and, generally speaking, to poetic decorations of the story. When, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the ballads had been collected and were known to the reading public, the form was imitated by poets like Scott, Coleridge, and Rossetti. Some of these poets tried to adhere more or less closely to the style and form of the traditional ballad, while others used the ballad form quite freely. As a consequence the modern ballad is little more than a stanzaic narrative poem of moderate length.

Page 1. LORD RANDAL. This is obviously a very old ballad, though it was not written down until the beginning of the nineteenth century. In another version the hero is called Lord Donald, and in a third, " My bonnie wee croodlin dow."

11. **eels,** on account of their similarity to snakes, have an unsavoury reputation in folk-lore.

Page 2. SIR PATRICK SPENS. This ballad, first printed in 1765, was taken down from recitation in Scotland. Sir Patrick is not known in history nor can his expedition be identified. It has been suggested that the basis of the story is an event in Scottish history. In 1281, Margaret, daughter of Alexander III of Scotland, was married to the King of Norway. Many of the Scottish nobles who conducted her to her husband were drowned on the voyage home. Margaret's daughter, the Maid of Norway, fell heir to the Scottish crown in 1286. A match was proposed between this infant maiden and the eldest son of Edward I of England. A deputation was sent to Norway in 1290 to bring the princess back, but she died on landing in Orkney.

1. **Dumferling :** Dunfermline, on the Firth of Forth, one of the early residences of the Kings of Scotland.
9. **braid :** broad, full.
25–26 : this phenomenon seems always to be associated in sailor superstition with bad luck—particularly bad weather.
29. **laith :** loth.
30. **To weet, etc. :** to wet their cork-heeled shoes.
31. **owre :** ere, before.
32. **aboone :** above.
35. **Or eir :** before.
38. **Kems :** combs.

41. **owre :** over; cf. line 31. **Aberdour :** either one of two villages on the east coast of Scotland.

Page 4. Rosabelle. This ballad is one of three songs sung at a wedding feast in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (Canto VI. stanza xxiii). The singer is Harold, " bard of brave St. Clair " (stanzas xxi and xxii).

10. **inch :** island.
13–14. A premonition of death.
15. **Ravensheuch :** pronounced *Ravenshoo* = Raven's Crag. A former residence of the Barons of Roslin—now in ruins.
16. **firth :** the Firth of Forth.
18. **Roslin :** near Edinburgh, famous for a beautiful chapel with carved pillars, the private chapel of the St. Clair family.
22. The lover is skilled at the game of sending his lance's point through a suspended ring.
38. **Deep sacristy.** Sacristy is the place where the sacred vessels are kept; the vestry. **Deep :** extending far back. **Altar's pale :** altar's enclosure, *i.e.* the chancel.
39. **foliage-bound :** covered with carvings of leaves.
41. **pinnet :** pinnacle.
42. **rose-carved buttress :** the stone supports of the walls were carved with rose-designs, " . . . in allusion to the name [Roslin], with which, however, the flower has no connection . . ." (Scott).

Page 5. Brignall Banks.—Edmund's song in *Rokeby*, Canto III. Here Scott is imitating the not uncommon ballad in which the fate of one of the characters is dependent on the guessing of a riddle. The action is supposed to take place in the northern part of Yorkshire, Brignall and Dalton being small places near the river Greta, a tributary of the Tees.

17. **read :** interpret, guess. So in the next two stanzas.
37. **brand :** sword. **musketoon :** heavy musket of seventeenth century.
40. **tuck :** sound, beat.
51. **the fiend, etc. :** Jack-o'-Lanthorn or Will-o'-the-Wisp, whose light was supposed to lead travellers to destruction.

Page 7. The Feud was first published in *Poems, Old and New* (1900).

1. **Sansard :** name and place are purely imaginary.

Page 8. The Italian in England (1845).

8. **Charles.** If this name applies to a particular person —not a necessary supposition for the understand-

ing of the poem—it probably refers to Charles Albert, an Italian Prince, afterwards king of Sardinia, who had been sympathetic with revolutionary principles. Desire to succeed to the throne, however, caused him to adhere to Austria, which at that time dominated Italy.

19. **Metternich :** the Austrian statesman, was the bitterest enemy of Italian freedom. **our friend,** spoken ironically.

41. **crypt :** a vault under a church used for burial; here a place of concealment.

75. **Duomo** (Italian) : cathedral.

76. **Tenebræ :** a service in the Roman Catholic Church in which candles are extinguished one after another. (L. *tenebrae* = darkness.)

126. **die slow of a broken heart.** The wish here expressed was fulfilled four years later when Charles Albert, having abdicated the crown in favour of his son, Victor Emmanuel, and retired to Portugal, died in 1849 " broken-hearted and misunderstood."

Page 13. THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH : the Poet's tale in *Tales of a Wayside Inn.*

4. **Saxon Cædmon :** the earliest of the known Anglo-Saxon poets, reputed author of paraphrases of the Bible story *Genesis, Exodus, Daniel,* etc. **Blithe-heart King :** God. ("Bliðheort cyning," " blithe or kind-hearted King," is an epithet applied to God in Cædmon's *Genesis,* l. 192.)

12. **Holy Writ :** see *Matthew* x. 29 : *Psalms* lxxxiv. 3, etc.

15. **raven's cry :** see *Psalms* cxlvii. 9.

17. **Sound :** Long Island Sound, between Long Island (N.Y.) and the mainland (Connecticut). Killingworth (l. 25) is about six miles inland.

30. **Cassandra :** daughter of Priam and Hecuba. She was given the power of prophecy, but with the reservation that her prophecies should not be believed. In vain, therefore, she foretold the destruction of Troy.

52. **Edwards :** Jonathan Edwards (1703–58) was an American divine, author of *Freedom of the Will* (1754).

54. **Adirondac :** *The Adirondacks* are a beautiful range of mountains in the north of New York state.

67. **bombazine :** dress material, much used in mourning.

89. **Plato :** Greek philosopher (b. 427 B.C.). His banishing the poets refers to the *Republic,* Book III.

93. **Troubadours :** travelling minstrels (especially in France) in the Middle Ages.
96. **David . . . Saul :** see 1 *Samuel* xvi. 23.
124. **madrigals :** unaccompanied part-songs for several voices. *Madrigal* often means a short love poem.
138. **windrows :** hay raked into long rows for the purpose of bunching into haycocks.
157–8. These lines may be thus paraphrased : " Or Death, which seems to us darkness, but is, as much as life, a 'gleam of God's omnipotence,' shining though it does in the other world."
172. **crowned . . . applause :** the school-children by their applause metaphorically placed upon his brow the wreath of victory.
184. **St. Bartholomew :** the reference is to the massacre of the Huguenots which began in Paris on St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1572, and spread through the provinces of France during the succeeding weeks.
193. **Herod :** see *Matthew* ii. 16–19.
212. **illumined pages :** the splendours of autumn are compared to the beautifully coloured designs with which the mediæval monks adorned the pages of the MSS. they made or copied. **Doomsday book :** the allusion is, of course, to the Domesday Book of William the Conqueror, so called because in the eyes of the people it was like the book which, they imagined, would be produced on the Day of Judgment. (A.S. *dōm* = judgment.)
229. **canticles :** little songs or hymns : especially those in the Prayer Book.

Page 20. To Daffodils.

8. **even-song :** evening service of the Church.
16. **hours :** the word suggests the brevity of the flower's life.

Page 21. Atalanta's Race is the first of the tales of *The Earthly Paradise* (1868), a series of twenty-four stories. In imitation of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the series is bound together by a connecting story which forms the subject of the prologue. A group of Scandinavian mariners reach a western land where, at a fortnightly feast, they exchange stories with their hosts. *Atalanta* was an Arcadian huntress. Her father had exposed her on the mountains when she was an infant because he wanted a son. She was nourished, however, by a she-wolf, and her father later recognised her as his daughter. (See ll. 150–171.)

I. 1. **Arcadian woods :** Arcadia, a province in southern Greece.
14. **cornel :** made of cornel wood.
28. **King Schœneus' town :** probably Tegea, one of the five cities of Arcadia.
63. **Fleet-foot One :** Hermes, or Mercury, whose sandals were provided at the ankles with wings. He was god of gymnastic exercises (amongst other things), and Arcadia was his most ancient seat.
79. **Diana :** patron goddess of the hunt and woodland.
167. **centaur.** The centaurs were mythical beings, half-men and half-horses, who lived in Thessaly.
177. **saffron gown :** worn by a bride.
184. **Sea-born One :** Aphrodite (Venus).
206. **Dryads :** wood-nymphs.
208. **Adonis' bane.** Adonis was slain by a wild boar.
211. **Argive cities :** cities of the state of Argos.
254. **chaffering :** bargaining.
275. **three-formed goddess :** Diana, who was known as Luna in heaven, Diana on earth and Hecate in the lower world (cf. **her,** l. 279).
282. **sea-born :** Aphrodite, goddess of love, who sprang from the sea foam.
301. **Artemis :** another name for Diana.
321. **as now :** as yet.
336. **equal :** fair, just (L. *æquus*).
340. **sleepy garland :** wreath of poppy.
354. **leech :** physician.
358. **Argolis :** another name for Argos.
363. **murk :** remnant of fruit after the juice has been pressed out.
391. **holpen :** old form of helped.
427. **golden age :** mythical age of peace and happiness.
526. **scrip :** wallet.
535. **Saturn's clime :** the golden age, when Saturn, not Jupiter, ruled.
663. **mighty Lord :** probably Zeus.
664. **her :** Aphrodite.
671. **old Phœnician :** Cadmus. The reference is probably to a famous peplus, or gown, given by Cadmus to his wife, Harmonia, on their wedding day.

Page 40. Flannan Isle. The Flannan Islands, often called the Seven Hunters, make a lonely group on the outer fringe of the Hebrides. The poem is founded on an actual occurrence at this place in recent years.

1–4. The opening stanza gives the exact report of the "passing ship" (l. 5).

26. **guillemot :** clumsy swimming bird. **shag :** species of cormorant.

Page 44. Forty Singing Seamen.

Prester John. Prester or Presbyter John was a mysterious character who in the Middle Ages was supposed to rule over a vast realm in the interior of Asia in the double capacity of King and Christian priest. (See Marco Polo's *Travels*, ch. 44.)

1. **Mogadore :** the chief seaport of Morocco on the Atlantic.
3. **Polyphemus :** chief of a fabled race of one-eyed monsters. **Ulysses** (l. 7) and his companions, having been wrecked on Polyphemus's island while returning from Troy, were imprisoned by him. Ulysses succeeded finally in making the monster drunk and blinding him, thus rendering possible the escape of the wanderers.
10. **vinous :** due to wine.
22. **Which . . . they.** This story is supposed to be told by one of the " simple seamen." **bay :** a wreath of bay-leaves was the emblem of a conqueror or a poet.
42. **Beachy Head :** a cape on the Sussex coast, England, about 600 feet high.
59. **Phœnix :** a fabulous bird, the only one of its kind, which, after living in the Arabian desert for six centuries, burnt itself on a funeral pyre and rose from its own ashes with renewed youth to live through another cycle.

Page 49. Christmas at Sea. Published in *Ballads*, January, 1891.

9. **South Head and the North.** There are two points so named within a short distance of one another at the entrance to Sydney Harbour, Australia, which Stevenson had visited in 1890. That the imagery and names are borrowed from the Australian part is made almost certain by a passage in J. A. Steuart's *Robert Louis Stevenson*, Vol. II., p. 175. The scene of the poem, of course, belongs to the northern hemisphere.
33. **high sea-light :** elevated light on shore to guide ships into harbour.
37. **her bearings :** her proper course.
38. **smelt :** nosed her way. There is a suggestion that the ship herself sensed the danger she was in.

Page 51. The Revenge. A " Report " of the fight celebrated in this poem was written by Sir Walter Raleigh

in the same year as the event, 1591. Tennyson follows in the main Raleigh's account.

1. **Azores :** a group of islands lying off the north-west coast of Africa. The English fleet had come out to intercept a Spanish convoy from the West Indies. **Grenville :** vice-admiral of the fleet.
4. **Howard :** admiral of the fleet.
7. **ships of the line :** term applied to warships of not less than three tiers of guns.
21. **thumbscrew and the stake :** instruments of torture used by the Inquisition.
30. **Seville :** in the south of Spain. Until 1563 it was the capital of the country.

Page 57. HERVÉ RIEL. In a letter to one of the publishers of the *Cornhill Magazine*, in the March (1871) number of which this poem first appeared, Browning stated his intention of devoting the proceeds to aid the people of Paris who were suffering from the Prussian invasion. The publisher, in hearty sympathy with the idea, paid him £100 for the poem.

1. **the Hogue :** Cap de La Hogue, the most prominent point of the coast of Normandy, projecting into the English Channel. Here an army had been collected by the French for an attack on England in support of James II. The French fleet under Admiral Tourville, which was to escort the army, was defeated by the combined English and Dutch fleets on May 19, 1692, while the deposed English monarch looked on from the coast.
5. **Saint Malo :** a seaport at the mouth of the Rance river, about 70 miles south of La Hogue. It was from St. Malo that Cartier sailed in 1535 on the expedition which resulted in the discovery and partial exploration of Canada.
7. **squadron :** the part of the French fleet which escaped under the command of **Damfreville** (l. 8).
18. **twelve and eighty.** This curious numeration is a translation of the French " quatre-vingt-douze."
30. **Plymouth Sound :** on the south-west coast of England ; always an important naval station.
44. **Croisickese :** belonging to Croisic, a fishing village in Brittany. Browning often stayed in Croisic (cf. " The Two Poets of Croisic "), and probably picked up the story of Hervé Riel here.
46. **Malouins :** people of St. Malo.
49. **Grève :** a sand-bar where the river empties into the sea.
53. **Solidor :** the fort at the entrance of the bay.

125. **nothing more.** Browning, for dramatic effect doubtless, has altered the facts somewhat. According to official records Hervé Riel asked and got a discharge from the service, " un congé absolu."
132. **bore the bell :** won the prize; a figure from the race track, where in former times the bell was the prize frequently offered.
135. **Louvre :** famous art museum at Paris around the outside walls of which are arranged statues of the celebrated heroes of France.

Page 62. To Autumn.

17. **Drowsed :** made drowsy. **hook :** sickle.
19. **like a gleaner :** as a gleaner. Autumn is thus personified here just as she earlier took the shape of a reaper.
27. **wailful :** wailing. Keats in another poem coins the words *blushful* and *easeful.*
30. **bourn :** strictly, boundary or limit. But Keats seems to extend the meaning to the space enclosed—region or perhaps sheep-fold.

Page 63. The Raven. In a treatise on this poem Poe calls the raven a " personification of mournful Remembrance."

10. **surcease :** cessation (archaic).
41. **Pallas :** Minerva, goddess of learning.
47. **Plutonian shore :** the shore of Death.
82. **nepenthe :** a drug which causes forgetfulness of grief.
89. **Is there . . . balm in Gilead?** Is there any healing for me? (quoted from Jer. viii. 22). A famous medicinal balm came from Gilead.
93. **Aidenn :** Paradise. The word is slightly changed from the Arabic form of *Eden.*

Page 69. The Sands of Dee.

Dee, a river in North Wales and Cheshire, which flows into the Irish Sea. The tide rises in the estuary with dangerous rapidity.

Page 69. The Passing of Arthur (1869) forms the closing scene of Tennyson's epic, *Idylls of the King.* The twelve parts which together form the epic are a poetic rendering of the most significant episodes of Thomas Malory's prose *Morte D'Arthur* (1469). The first of the series, *The Coming of Arthur,* introduces King Arthur paramount in Britain, wedded to Guinevere, and surrounded by his " Knights of the Round Table," an order established by the King to redress the wrongs of the world. The following ten poems,

"The Round Table," describe the adventures of his chief knights. The allegory which connects the whole is "the conflict continually maintained between the spirit and the flesh." The mutual love of Lancelot and Guinevere ultimately prevails over their loyalty to the King; many of the Knights prove untrue to their vows and range themselves under the standard of Modred, Arthur's treacherous nephew, who, leagued with Guinevere, tries to usurp the throne. Thus was dissolved

> The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
> Whereof the world holds record.

6. **march to westward.** After settling with Lancelot King Arthur was advancing against Modred, who was in retreat toward Lyonnesse.
30. **Gawain** had been slain in the struggle against Lancelot. The Gawain of the old romances is a much nobler type of man than the Gawain of the *Idylls*.
68. **heathen.** After having made himself master of Britain, by driving the heathen kings beyond the Roman wall, Arthur defied the power of Rome herself (ll. 68, 133). (See *The Coming of Arthur*.)
77. **Almesbury.** Queen Guinevere, a penitent woman, had sought refuge at the Abbey Almesbury, and there she had been visited by the King. (See *Guinevere*.)
81. **Lyonnesse.** According to old tradition, the Scilly Isles were at one time connected with the mainland. The connecting land, now covered with water, was known as Lyonnesse.
118 **Some one deathbed.** All available texts have this reading. The reading *lone* for *one* has been suggested.
148. **and so :** and if it be that.
157. **sware my vows :** sware to be true to the vows imposed by Arthur when he made them his knights. (See *The Coming of Arthur*, 259–268.)
168. **Excalibur :** Arthur's miraculous sword, given to him by the Lady of the Lake. (See *The Coming of Arthur*.)
170. The part of the poem from here to l. 439 was published under the title, *Morte D'Arthur*.
189. **Camelot :** the legendary seat of Arthur's court; variously identified with Caerleon (Wales), Carlisle, Glastonbury, Winchester, etc.
191. **Merlin :** the magician of the court.
199. **samite :** dress fabric of silk sometimes interwoven with gold.
248. **lief and dear :** synonymous in this phrase.

278. **conceit:** clever idea. He has reasoned so artfully that he has blinded himself to the rightful course of action.

366. **Three Queens.** At the coronation of Arthur, (see *The Coming of Arthur*, 256 ff.) three queens

> " . . . stood in silence near his throne . . .
> . . . who will help him at his need."

383. **greaves and cuisses:** armour for shins and thighs respectively.

401. **Elders.** See the story of the Wise Men of the East, *Matthew* ii. 7–12.

427. **Avilion:** generally associated with Glastonbury in Somersetshire, though it seems there is no valley near that town. Its locality is as vague as that of Camelot.

451. **He comes again.** Compare the tradition of Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany, who was drowned during the Third Crusade. It was said that he was but hiding and would return in the hour of need to save the empire he had ruled.

Page 82. THE LADY OF SHALOTT (1833), Tennyson's earliest printed treatment of the Arthurian legend. The subject was expanded in *Launcelot and Elaine* (1859).

5. **Camelot:** see note, *Passing of Arthur*, l. 188.

9. **Shalott:** Malory's Astolat.

56. **ambling pad:** horse with an easy pace.

77. **Sir Lancelot:** the chief of Arthur's knights in the later versions of the legend.

84. **Galaxy:** Milky Way.

87. **blazon'd baldric:** belt painted with heraldic devices.

107. **"Tirra lirra":** probably a corruption of the French " tirelire," the song of the lark.

Page 87. TO A SKYLARK. In this lyric Shelley shows characteristic passion and profusion of imagery. He follows a methodical plan—three equal divisions of his subject with a brief conclusion—but has taken scant pains with his rhymes.

22. **that silver sphere:** either the morning star or the moon.

36–7. The poet is figuratively invisible on account of the brilliant halo which he has created about him by the intensity of his own thought. In his moment of inspiration he becomes, like the bird, a disembodied spirit—pure thought.

66. **Hymeneal:** belonging to Hymen, the god of marriage.

71. **fountains:** sources.

80: obviously alludes to l. 75. In the bird's love there is none of the pain or sadness which mortals sometimes feel from a surfeit of love.

103–5. The poet would be so inspired that the world would listen to him, enraptured by his poems as he is now by the bird's song.

Page 90. To A Skylark (Wordsworth).

16. **more divine:** *i.e.* more heavenly than what inspires the nightingale.

Page 91. The Vision of Sir Launfal.

7. **aurora:** belonging to the morning. Aurora was goddess of dawn.

9–10. These lines probably allude to Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality.*

12. **Sinais.** The reference is to the mountain by the wilderness from whence Moses heard the voice of God (*Exodus* xix. 1–4). The line implies that the vision of Heaven is not confined to childhood.

17. **druid wood.** To the Britons the groves were sacred, and in them the priests, or druids, offered sacrifice.

18. **benedicite.** This Latin word means literally "bless ye." As a noun it means "blessing."

27. **cap and bells:** part of the equipment of the court jester or fool.

56. **nice:** able to detect minute differences.

99. **Holy Grail:** the object for which King Arthur's knights went questing. It was the cup from which, according to one line of story, Jesus drank at the Last Supper. This vessel had been brought, so it was said, to the Abbey of Glastonbury in Somersetshire, but as the wickedness of the world increased it disappeared. Sir Launfal, like the other knights, had vowed to find it.

130. **Maiden knight:** one who had not yet had an adventure, *i.e.* imperilled his life in a "quest."

146. **pitcher-plant:** a plant with leaves shaped like a pitcher.

184. **groined:** joined as in a groin. In architecture a groin is the angular curve formed by the meeting or intersection of two arches.

190. **forest-crypt.** A crypt is usually a vault under a church. The brook has fashioned a whole cathedral (or winter palace, l. 204)—roof, arches, aisles, crypt, here and there adorned with delicately carved patterns (fretwork) of frost design.

196. **arabesques:** fantastic designs, after the manner of Arabian ornamentation.

213. **corbel :** an architectural term meaning a projection of stone or timber jutting out from the wall to support a weight.
231. **burden :** refrain.
233. **seneschal :** the steward of a mediæval castle.
278. **ice-isles :** icebergs.
307. **Beautiful Gate :** probably refers to the eastern, the most beautiful of the nine gates of the sanctuary in the Temple of Jerusalem. By this gate St. Peter cured the lame man (see *Acts* iii.).

Page 101. The Glove and the Lions. The incident related in the poem occurs at the court of Francis I of France. Browning later gave the lady's side of the question in *The Glove*.

Page 102. The Glove.

Peter Ronsard loquitur : Peter Ronsard speaks. Pierre Ronsard was the leader of a group who sought to Latinise French poetry—a mere youth at the death of Francis I.
7. **aghast I'm.** Note all through the poem the ingenious rhymes, not a sign of seriousness in poetry.
12. **Naso :** the cognomen of Ovid, famous for his love poetry.
14. **Ixions :** people who make love to clouds.
25. **Sir De Lorge.** Browning, of course, knows that in English *Sir* cannot immediately precede a surname.
45. **Clement Marot :** a writer of light verse who was a good deal older than Ronsard.
50. That lion of the tribe of Judah.
59. **For who knew,** etc. : the lion's thoughts, which run, "Who knows what the noise means and whether the way isn't clear and I am at last free ?"
80. The visitor would become "the lion's meat."
82. **Marignan :** victory of the French over the Swiss, 1515.
89. **nonchalance :** properly accented on first syllable.
150. **until time should define,** etc. : until an unsought occasion should prove De Lorge's sincerity—the only proper way out of the difficulty. Her "vanity" was shown in making an artificial occasion.
162. **Nemean :** the most terrible sort of lion, such as Hercules overcame.

Page 114. The Sea King's Burial. "The old Norse kings, when about to die, had their body laid into a ship; the ship sent forth with sails set, and slow fire burning in it, that, once out at sea, it might blaze up in flame, and in

such manner bury worthily the old hero, at once in the sky and in the ocean." Carlyle: *Heroes and Hero Worship.*

17. **King Balder:** not to be confused with the god Balder.
38. **Vikingr:** Old Norse form of *Viking*, here apparently used as plural.
39. **Valhalla:** the Palace of the Dead, where the souls of heroes slain in battle enjoyed immortality. The word means "The hall of the slain."
43. **Odin** or Woden, the supreme god of Teutonic tribes.
189. **Thor:** the god of thunder in Scandinavian mythology.
223. **requiems.** In the Roman Catholic Church a requiem is a service for the dead.

Page 120. KING ROBERT OF SICILY: the Sicilian's tale in *Tales of a Wayside Inn.* It is difficult and indeed impossible to identify the hero of this romance. The sinner who becomes a saint is a frequent subject for poetry, and especially was this the case in the Middle Ages. The 59th chapter of the *Gesta Romanorum* (prose) contains a history of the Emperor Jovinian nearly identical with the present story. Again, the romance of *Robert the Devil* obviously belongs to the same family as the story here told by Longfellow. Robert the Devil is probably Robert of Normandy, son of William the Conqueror, who, after a life of dissipation, mortgaged his dukedom of Normandy to go on the First Crusade, and thereby obtained a reputation for sanctity. Sicily was conquered by the Normans and was ruled by them from A.D. 1072 to 1194. Thus a Norman Duke might easily be confused in popular story with a Sicilian King, especially as several of the Norman Kings of Sicily were named Robert. But it is unnecessary, as it is impossible, to establish the identity of the persons. It was Pope Urban II who preached the First Crusade and who persuaded Robert of Normandy to go to the Holy Land, and that may account for a *Pope Urbane* (line 1) being made a brother of the King of Sicily in the story; but there is no record of any *Valmond*, Emperor of Germany (*Allemaine*, line 2).

5. **St. John's eve:** more probably the eve of the festival of St. John the Evangelist, December 27, than that of St. John the Baptist, June 24. **vespers:** evensong.
6. **Magnificat:** Hymn of the Virgin Mary in the Church service, so named from the opening word (see *Luke* i. 46–55).
9. **Deposuit,** etc. These Latin words are translated in lines 14–15.
34. **stalls:** enclosed seats in the chancel or choir of a church reserved for clergymen.

56. **seneschal :** steward ; a high official in the household of the mediæval knight or king.
82. **Jester :** a professional fool who acted as entertainer at the mediæval court. The bells, cape and ape (ll. 83–4) or monkey were part of the usual equipment of the jester. (See *Vision of Sir Launfal*, l. 27.)
106. **Saturnian reign :** mythical age of peace and happiness when Saturn, not Jupiter, was King of heaven.
110. **Enceladus :** one of the giants who made war on the gods. He was killed by Zeus and buried under Mount Ætna. The line signifies that Mount Ætna was quiet and that consequently the islanders had no fear of volcanic activity.
132. **Holy Thursday :** the day before Good Friday.
150. **Saint Peter's square :** in front of St. Peter's palace, the residence of the Popes.
154. **He entertained,** etc. : alluding to *Hebrews* xiii.

PART II

Page 127. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

12. **eftsoons :** at once.
20. **Mariner.** Notice the old accentuation, and compare **gossameres** (l. 184) and **countree** (l. 518).
32. **bassoon :** wind instrument of wood, deeper in tone than the oboe.
36. **minstrelsy :** band of minstrels.
62. **swound :** swoon.
64. **thorough :** through. Compare **thoroughfare.**
76. **vespers :** evenings. Usually it means evening service.
152. **I wist :** corruption of the adverb *iwis* (surely).
245. **or ever :** before ever. *Or* is not the ordinary conjunction, but an old form of *ere*.
297. **silly :** simple, homely (almost the original meaning of the word).
314. **fire-flags :** some electrical disturbance, perhaps the aurora. **sheen :** bright, fair.
337. **'gan work :** did work.
384. The perpendicular rays of the sun seem to hold the ship immovable.
512. **shrieve :** give pardon for sin confessed (usually "shrive").
535. **ivy-tod :** ivy bush.

Page 147. Ivry. The battle of Ivry (1590) was the deciding engagement in the war waged by Henry IV of France (previously King of Navarre) against his rebellious Catholic subjects and their ally, Philip II of Spain.

5. **Rochelle :** La Rochelle, famous Protestant stronghold on the west coast of France.
12. **League :** association of Catholic nobles founded by the Duke of Guise.
14. **Appenzel :** Swiss canton. **Egmont :** Flemish count.
15. **Lorraine :** the family name of the dukes of Mayenne and Guise.
18. **Coligny :** Admiral de Coligny, Huguenot leader, victim of the Massacre of St Bartholomew.
27. **An if :** if.
30. **oriflamme :** the sacred banner of St. Denis.
32. **culverin :** cannon.
33. **The fiery Duke :** the Duke of Mayenne, head of the Catholic "League."
34. **Guelders :** province of Holland. **Almayne :** Germany.
36. **golden lilies :** emblem of France.
42. **D'Aumale :** another rebellious duke.
54. **Rosny :** Maximilian de Sully, Baron de Rosny, trusted minister of Henry IV. **cornet :** cavalry standard.
61. **Vienna . . . Lucerne.** They probably sent mercenaries to Philip's forces.
66. **Saint Genevieve :** patron saint of Paris, which Henry besieged after the battle.

Page 150. THE CASTAWAY. The poem is founded upon a story told in Anson's *Voyages*.

7. **Albion :** England.
49. **the page :** the page of the ship's "log" that recorded the accident.

Page 152. BORDER MARCH. This poem, while not narrative, is included here as being in character with Scott's imitations of the ballad proper. It gives the spirit of the Border fighters of the sixteenth century. The places referred to are all in the southern counties of Scotland, where Ettrick and Teviotdale are drained by the Tweed, and Eskdale and Liddesdale by the Esk.

4. **Blue Bonnets :** referring to the characteristic Scottish head covering, now called "tam o' shanter."
10. **the Queen :** Mary, Queen of Scots.
11. **hirsels :** small holdings of sheep or cattle.
14. **buckler :** round shield.

Page 153. PROUD MAISIE.

7. **six braw gentlemen :** six fine gentlemen, *i.e.* pall-bearers.
8. **Kirkward :** to the church.
12. **delves :** digs.

Page 154. Roundabouts and Swings.

2. **Fair-day come to-morrow :** the day before Fair-day.
4. **Pharaoh :** man who provides amusements at fairs.
5. **cove :** fellow (slang).
6. **tarrier :** terrier.
7. **lurcher :** cross-bred dog much used by poachers.
8. **roundabouts :** merry-go-rounds.
13. **the very spit :** the exact copy.
21. **night-jar :** bird with monotonous song.
22. **sooth :** truth, wise saying.

Page 155. The Prisoner of Chillon is founded on the actual experience of a Swiss patriot, François de Bonnivard, who in 1530 was confined *alone* in the Castle of Chillon on Lake Geneva by the tyrannical Duke of Savoy. He was freed at the end of six years by a victory of the Swiss. In the poem Byron shows unusual simplicity of style, and contrives for once to lose himself in the personality of the prisoner.

21. **One in fire, and two in field.** The hero's brothers have died for Protestantism, one at the stake and two in battle.
35. **marsh's meteor lamp :** Will-o'-the-Wisp.
95. **had stood :** (subjunc.) would have stood. So in l. 141.
107. **Lake Leman :** the old name of Lake Geneva, Cæsar's "Lacus Lemannus."
110. **fathom-line :** line for measuring depth of water, usually marked in fathoms (units of six feet).
255, 257. **mine :** my ear. **they :** my eyes.
339. **the . . . distant town :** Montreux, two miles away.
381. There are many accounts of prisoners making pets of spiders and mice.

Page 166. The Isles of Greece. (From *Don Juan*, Canto III.)

2. **Sappho :** famous poetess of Greece, born at Lesbos in the seventh century B.C. Her love poems are full of passion, hence "burning."
4. **Delos :** one of the Cyclades in the Ægean. According to tradition it rose suddenly above the waves and floated until Zeus fastened it to the bottom of the sea. It was the birthplace of Apollo (*Phœbus*) the sun-god, god of light, music, etc. of Greek mythology.
7. **Scian . . . Teian.** Scio or Chios, an island off the west coast of Asia Minor, is one of the localities which claim to be the birth-place of Homer. Teios was the birthplace of Anacreon (560–476 B.C.), who wrote poems on love and wine.

12. **"Islands of the Blest."** The *Fortunatae Insulæ* were situated vaguely in "the west" beyond the pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar) (cf. the phrase "go west" = die), and were fabled to contain the Elysian Fields, the ancient Greek Paradise.
13. **Marathon:** in Attica, where the Athenians defeated the Persians, 490 B.C.
20. **Salamis:** an island off the east coast of Attica, where the fleet of Xerxes was defeated by the Greeks in view of the Persian King, who had taken up a position on a neighbouring mountain (480 B.C.). A short time before the naval engagement, the invading Persian army had been temporarily delayed by a band of 300 Spartans (l. 40) under their King, Leonidas, at the pass of Thermopylæ. The Spartans were finally taken in the rear through treachery and all were slain.
50. **Samian.** Samos, another island in the Ægean Sea, has always been noted for its wines.
54. **Bacchanal:** worshipper of Bacchus, god of wine.
55. **Pyrrhic dance:** a mimic war-dance among the Greeks, said by some to have been invented by Pyrrhus, son of Achilles.
56. **Pyrrhic phalanx.** The phalanx was the peculiar Greek battle formation (cf. battalion, legion, etc.), perfected by Philip of Macedon and used with great success by Pyrrhus (318–272 B.C.) in his war against Rome.
59. **Cadmus:** the Phœnician, fabled to have brought the alphabet to Greece.
64. **Polycrates:** tyrant of Samos, patron of artists and poets, and friend of Anacreon.
67. **Chersonese:** ancient name of the Gallipoli peninsula.
69. **Miltiades:** Greek general at Marathon.
74. **Suli's rock.** Suli, in Albania, was the birthplace of Marcos Bozzaris (1788–1823), a famous Greek patriot in the struggle with Turkey for independence. He has been called "the Leonidas of Modern Greece." **Parga's shore:** Parga, a sea-port somewhat north of Suli.
76. **Doric.** The Dorians were the most warlike race of ancient Greece.
78. **Heracleidan blood:** the descendants of Heracles or Hercules, who conquered the Peloponnesus and established Doric states.
79. **Franks.** Originally this term was applied generally in the Orient to the people of Western Europe, but Byron here apparently means the French, whose King at that time was Louis XVIII. As there

seems to be no specific historical incident which would justify the charge here made, the accusation should probably be put down to the poet's inveterate hatred of all the established dynasties of Europe.

83. **Latin :** applies to all the modern nations speaking the languages descended from ancient Latin—French, Italian, Spanish, etc.

91. **Sunium :** a promontory forming the southern extremity of Attica. The **marbled steep** refers to a famous temple of Athena which formerly stood on this site. The columns of the temple are still extant, and give the modern name, Cape Colonna, to the promontory.

94. **swan-like :** referring to the poetic fancy that the swan sings its own death-song.

Page 169. The Pilot of the Plains first appeared in *White Wampum.*

Page 171. Riding Together (1858).

4. **our Lady's Feast :** Lady Day, the Festival of the Annunciation, March 25.

18. **rood :** cross.

Page 173. The Well of Saint Keyne.

27. **an if :** if. Old writers use *and* or *an* for *if.*

35. **the Angel summoned her.** St. Keyne is said to have been warned by angels of her approaching death.

Page. 174 The Battle of Blenheim. This powerful argument against the glorification of war is based on the battle of August 13, 1704, at Blenheim on the Danube, where a large army of French and Bavarians was defeated with great slaughter by the British and their Austrian allies. Kaspar of the ballad is supposed to be an Austrian.

Page 176. The Stone.

2. **" throwback " :** a popular term for what is known in the language of Evolution as " reversion to type."

6. **Walt Whitman :** American poet (1819–1892).

8. **polyphlœsbœan :** loud-roaring. A humorous transliteration of *πολύφλοισβος,* the constant epithet in Homer for the sea.

14. **chortled :** chuckled loudly. (A word invented by Lewis Carroll in *Alice in Wonderland.*)

15. **dithyrambic :** wild. The " dithyramb " was a wild Greek Choric hymn, especially used in honour of Bacchus.

18. **concession line.** In Ontario the townships are divided into " concessions " separated by roads called

"concession lines." The roads intersecting these "lines" are the "side-roads."

41. **council:** the township council.

49. **pungs:** a pung is a low box-sleigh. **crotches:** a "crotch" was a kind of stone-boat made of a sapling, the butt of which was fastened to the yoke and the crotched end allowed to trail on the ground. On this crotch a board platform was nailed if desirable.

60. **merger:** combine of business interests, which, by killing competition, might obstruct enterprise.

77. **dockers:** iron supports holding up the log in the fireplace.

117. **dædal:** inventive, complex.

132. **labyrinths.** Theseus, the great legendary hero of Athens, went voluntarily as one of the seven youths whom the Athenians were obliged to send every year, with seven maidens, to Crete, to be devoured by the Minotaur. This monster, half-man and half-bull, was kept in the labyrinth. Theseus having slain the beast, found his way out of the labyrinth by means of a thread given him by Ariadne, daughter of the King of Crete.

134. **Hercules.** The cleansing of the Augean stables is one of the twelve "labours of Hercules." Augeus, king of Elis, had a herd of 3000 oxen, whose stalls had not been cleansed for thirty years. The task of cleansing them in one day was successfully performed by Hercules.

Page 181. AT THE CEDARS was printed in *The Magic House and Other Poems* (1895).

Page 184. A MOTHER IN EGYPT.

"**About midnight . . .**" *Exodus* xi. 4–5.

30. **Amun** ("the hidden or veiled one"): an Egyptian deity sometimes represented as a ram with large curving horns, sometimes as a being with a ram's head and a human body. **Hathor:** an Egyptian goddess.

Page 186. JOHN GILPIN.

3. **train-band captain:** captain in the militia. **eke:** also.

11. **the Bell at Edmonton.** The village of Edmonton, eight miles north of central London, still has the Bell Inn, rebuilt since Cowper's day.

12. **chaise and pair:** light carriage drawn by a pair of horses. On long journeys these horses were changed at set stations called posts. The lad who drove,

mounted on one of the horses, was called a post-boy.

23. **Calender :** tradesman who presses cloth.
44. **Cheapside :** busy street in the heart of London.
64. **do exercise :** drill.
97. **neck or nought :** neck or nothing, recklessly.
100. **running such a rig :** playing such a prank.
115. **carries weight :** is handicapped by carrying an agreed weight. (Racing parlance.)
119. **turnpike men :** men who collected tolls at certain gates, which could be swung across the road.
128. **as :** as if.
135. **Wash :** shallow water or marsh. The road apparently went right through it.
142. **balcony :** accented by Cowper (and by Byron) on the second syllable.

Page 196. FIDELITY.

6. **brake :** thicket (not the same as *brake*, the plant).
20. **tarn :** small mountain lake.
21. **Helvellyn :** mountain in the English Lake Country.

Page 198. THE YARN OF THE "NANCY BELL."

2. **Deal to Ramsgate :** on the east coast of Kent.
71. **shallot :** a vegetable like garlic used in seasoning and in making pickles.

Page 201. THE VIOLINIST.

1. **Dresden :** in Germany, famous as a musical centre.
32. **fulfilled :** filled to overflowing. The subject is probably "ecstasy."
68. **Spohr.** Louis Spohr (1784–1859) was one of the greatest violinists and one of the best conductors of his generation. His musical compositions number more than two hundred.

Page 203. LOW TIDE ON GRAND PRÉ. This poem deals with the Grand Pré of Longfellow's *Evangeline*, a great stretch of low land on the shores of the Basin of Minas in Nova Scotia. The great ebb to the Bay of Fundy and the infinitesimal slope of the shore makes low tide very impressive.

2. **by the tide :** beside the salt water.
8. **He :** the sun.
12. **Acadie :** the Maritime Provinces, and especially the parts settled by the French.
14. **one beloved face :** that of the companion mentioned below.
25. **birch :** birch-bark canoe.
39. **time was ripe :** time had come to an end.

Page 205. THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN. Browning wrote the poem to amuse the son of Macready the actor, when the child was confined to the house through illness. It is possible that the story which Browning recounts, the last part of it at least, had its origin in the Children's Crusade.

23. **noddy :** simpleton, noodle.
37. **guilder :** obsolete Dutch gold coin.
89. **Tartary.** In the Middle Ages this term referred vaguely to Central Asia. **Cham :** Khan, the sovereign prince or emperor.
91. **Nizam :** sovereign of the principal native state of India.
92. **vampire-bats :** blood-sucking bats.
123. **Julius Cæsar.** The reference is to an exploit in Egypt. According to Suetonius (*Life of Cæsar*), while Cæsar was assaulting a bridge at Alexandria, he was forced by a sally of the enemy to take to a small boat; when many others threw themselves into the boat, Cæsar plunged into the sea, and holding up in his left hand some papers he was carrying, so as to keep them dry, he swam 200 yards to a ship, dragging his cloak after him with his teeth. Browning's implication (l. 125) that the papers were the MS. of his *Commentaries* has no foundation in the story as given by either Suetonius or Plutarch.
138. **drysaltery :** shop that deals in drugs, gums, oils, etc.
139. **nuncheon :** food taken between full meals.
158. **Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock :** names of various kinds of wine, the first three French, and the last German, as is **Rhenish** (l. 160).
177. **Bagdat :** Bagdad, the once famous Mohammedan city on the Tigris noted for the splendour of its life. Its connection with the *Arabian Nights* makes it a fitting place for a magician like the Piper to visit.
179. **Caliph's.** A caliph is a Mohammedan chief.
182. **stiver :** a very small (Dutch) coin.
246. **fallow deer :** small deer of pale brownish or reddish colour.

Page 213. DRAKE'S DRUM. This is an imitation of the chanty, a song sung by sailors in rhythm with their work as when heaving at the capstan or hauling on a rope. The poem is based upon the tradition that in times of great danger Drake's drum is heard rousing the sailors to do their duty in the face of the enemy. The tradition is still alive and operative, apparently. Sailors are reported as affirming that they plainly heard Drake's drum during the battle of Jutland,

1916. A drum, painted with the arms of Sir Francis Drake, is preserved among other relics at Buckland Abbey, Devon, the seat of the Drake family.

3. **Nombre Dios Bay.** Drake died on board his own ship near the town of Nombre de Dios (Porto Bello), and was buried in the bay of that name in the manner here indicated, 1595. The **round shot,** of course, were to weight the body.
12. **Plymouth Hoe :** the rocky headland overlooking Plymouth Sound (l. 21), Devonshire, England. It was here that Drake first sighted the Armada in 1588.
15. **Dons :** Spaniards.
23. **trade :** naval warfare.

Page 214. Vitaï Lampada. The title of this poem means "the torch of life." The metaphor is from the Grecian torch-race, which was what we should call a relay-race, each runner, keeping the torch burning and handing it on still lighted, to the next one in the relay. The phrase is archaic Latin, quoted from Lucretius.

1. **Close :** school playground. The word is pronounced like the adjective, not like the verb.
3. **pitch :** the piece of sward on which the cricket stumps are set up.
11. **Gatling :** the forerunner of the modern machine gun, so called from the inventor, R. J. Gatling (1818–1903). By means of a revolving handle a constant rifle fire was kept up from eight or ten rifle barrels which revolved on an axis. It was patented in 1861.

Page 215. He Fell Among Thieves. The events of the poem, as is shown by the names of stanza 4, occur in the hills in the extreme north of India. The hero has apparently made an expedition into the region, relying on the friendship of the native tribesmen. The title, of course, is suggested by *Luke* x. 30.

24. **brasses :** memorial tablets of brass.
25. **Close :** enclosed playground. (See notes to preceding poem, l. 1).
32. **Dons :** professors and tutors.

Page 217. The Lost Leader (1845). Though Wordsworth's defection from the Liberal cause may have suggested this poem, Browning protested against its being taken as a portrait of the earlier poet. "Once call my fancy portrait Wordsworth," he said in a letter, "and how much more

ought one to say." "Lost Leaders" of the kind outlined in this poem are innumerable.

5–8. We who would gladly have given our all—which was copper as compared to their gold, or rags as compared with their purple (royal) cloth—were spurned by him for others who gave grudgingly only their second best (silver instead of gold).

25. **Life's night:** the darkening of the radiance in which life appeared to the hopeful Liberals. Cf. "glad confident morning" (l. 28).

Page 218. KING HENRY VII and THE SHIPWRIGHTS. King Henry VII is practically the founder of the English Navy, which has had since his day the continuous life not enjoyed before.

2. **comen.** Here, and in **sawen, maken,** the poet uses the old **-en** endings of the verb. **Hamull on the Hoke:** apparently invented by Mr. Kipling. **Suthampton:** Hampshire.

3. **the Mary.** This and the names in the last stanza belong to actual ships of Henry's fleet.

8. **clerk:** rhyming with **mark** (just as **Dieu,** in last stanza, rhymes with **too**).

10. **haled:** pulled.

11. **habiliments:** equipment. **King his:** King's (older spelling *Kingis*).

13. **of a trusty tree:** of sound wood (old ballad phrase).

15. **strakes:** joists.

35. **sith:** since.

17. **crope:** crept.

18. **felawes:** fellows.

29. **Gramercy:** thanks. **council:** policy, advice (now *counsel*). **liketh:** pleases.

31. **pricking:** spurring.

33. **naughty:** villainous.

Page 220. THE RED FISHERMAN (1827).

15. **rosary:** a string of beads on which are counted (told) the prayers which go to make up a devotion.

22. **crozier:** the crook-headed staff which is one of the insignia of a bishop.

38. **advocate:** generally a lawyer who pleads a case.

48. **rood:** quarter of an acre.

95. **Congreve.** Sir William (1772–1828) was the inventor of several military devices, of which the rocket was the most famous.

103. **Ham and Shem:** sons of Noah.

106. **gentle:** maggot.

128. **Pater Noster:** "Our father," the first words (Latin) of the Lord's Prayer.

130. **Bosworth plain :** in Leicestershire, where Richard III, formerly the Duke of Gloucester, was defeated and slain, 1485.
159. **St. Edmund's Bury :** or Bury St. Edmunds, a town in Suffolk in which is situated a famous abbey founded by Canute.
183. **Rivers.** Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, whose sister, Elizabeth, married Edward IV, was beheaded by Richard III in 1483. Lord **Hastings** was also beheaded in the same year. These nobles are typical examples of the men who "bent the knee" to the King.
199. **Mistress Shore :** the wife of a respectable young citizen of London, became the mistress of King Edward IV, the **gallant** of l. 196, and presumably the singer of the passage beginning at l. 178. After the death of Edward IV she was compelled by Richard III to do penance, and died in poverty.
207. **tomes :** volumes. **loaded dice :** weighted with lead so as to fall with a certain face up.
211. **mitre :** bishop's tall cap deeply indented at the top.
221. **swaling wherry :** a light row-boat swaying from side to side or up and down.
242. **Emancipation.** In the struggle for Catholic Emancipation (1801–29) the Lords especially had bitterly opposed political equality to the Catholics.

Page 227. THE VAGABOND.

Air : probably "Mut" ("Courage") in the "Winter Journey" cycle.
2. **lave :** rest (Scots).
9. **blow :** death. Stevenson lived in constant expectation of death from tuberculosis.

Page 228. THE JOYS OF THE ROAD.

17. **another :** another hope.
26. **Dickon :** Dick, the comrade of l. 32.
27. **Thirsty Sword.** A not uncommon feature of old heroic stories is a sword which, once drawn, cannot be sheathed till it has drunk blood.
54. An impulse as wayward as the wind, as flickering as a dream.

Page 230. THE LADIES OF ST. JAMES'S.

Phyllida, etc. "I love Phyllis before all others."
1. **St. James's :** the English Court.
6. **shoon :** old plural of shoe.
11. **Ombre :** a card game.
47. **Shrove-tide :** the three days before Ash Wednesday.

Page 232. SRÁHMANDÁZI (probably pronounced Sráhmandáhzee) deals with the beliefs of the Bantus of West Africa.

4. **the twilight :** the shades of death.
9. **the bow :** the bow of life.
13. **songnet.** According to Sir Henry Newbolt's note on the poem, "this resembles a long piece of fishing net folded; when opened it is seen to contain 'tokens'—such as a leopard's paw . . . or a dried fish—sewn firmly to the meshes.... making a kind of symbolical index to the Songman's repertory; the audience make their choice by laying a hand upon any token which appears desirable." Last of the series always comes the token of the Song of Dying. This is never called for until the moment of death.

Page 234. SAM'S THREE WISHES.

5. **I knows on :** I know of. Sam is an English rustic, who says *ax* for *ask* and *us* for *we*.
7. **nobbut inside 'un :** nobody inside it. Usually *nobbut* = none but.
23. **wist :** knowest.
25. **rush :** rush light, rude candle with rush for wick.
38. **pixy-pears :** fairy pears.
40. **fairy-knowes :** knolls or rings made by fairies.
42. **Potencies:** powers.
50. **crany :** cranium, head.
52. **Michaelmas Day :** September 29, when a goose is the traditional fare.
92. **nowt :** naught, nothing.
124. **sooth :** soft, smooth (poetical word).
133. **glour :** glower, stare.
170. **sops-in-wine :** clove-pink or gillyflower.
195. **gooming :** looking intently.
206. **rattle :** plant with rattling seed.
218. **Christian :** human being.
227. **stave :** sing out.

Page 240. TRULY GREAT.

11. **nor voice to call :** and that no other voice can call.

Page 241. "A WEARY LOT IS THINE, FAIR MAID." Sung by young Edmund in *Rokeby* (Canto III).

4. **rue :** plant with bitter leaves of medicinal value. The reference is both to this bitterness and to the verb **rue** = repent.
7. A tight jacket made of green cloth from Lincoln (much in favour with foresters).

12. **fain :** eagerly.

Page 242. "CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME" (1855). Edgar's Song, which suggested this poem to Browning, occurs in *King Lear*, Act III, Scene 4. *Childe* is practically equivalent to *Sir*.

The supposed difficulty of this piece is largely removed if the reader can make up his mind that no allegory is intended. The best approach to the poem is to imagine Browning as having just finished reading the passage in *King Lear* referred to above, and speculating on a scene or story that fits the lines. The "hoary cripple" who appears at the beginning of the poem is a character often to be met with in mediæval romance. He is usually a malicious creature; this one, however, in spite of his sinister appearance, directs the quester aright.

37. **quest :** especially applied to the pursuit of an object by the mediæval knights.
48. **estray :** a law term signifying an animal, not wild, found wandering from its owner; a stray.
58. **spurge :** a plant frequently found in waste places.
66. **calcine :** burn to ashes.
68. **bents :** reedy, rushlike grass.
70. **dock :** a coarse, weedy herb.
72. **pashing,** crushing.
80. **colloped :** having ridges or bunches of flesh, like collops.
91. **Cuthbert** and **Giles** (l. 97) are obviously two of the quester's friends of the "earlier happier" days (l. 87) whom he calls to mind.
114. **bespate :** bespattered.
133. **cirque :** arena, natural amphitheatre.
135. **mews :** stabling round an open yard.
140. **engine :** machine.
143. **Tophet :** here means hell.
160. **Apollyon's :** the devil's.
178. **scalped :** with bare, rounded top.
179. **nonce :** time, present occasion.
187. **Not see :** this and the **Not hear** (l. 193) refer to his not having seen or heard anything (hence **Dunce,** l. 178) to warn him of the presence of the Tower, in spite of the fact that the sun had lighted the scene (l. 189) and that significant noises were to be heard everywhere (l. 193).
192. **heft :** old form of "haft," a handle.
203. **slug-horn.** Browning has erroneously taken the Scots word "slughorne," which means "slogan," to mean a kind of horn or trumpet.

Page 249. Dog.

6. **humble dark :** some insignificant closet, *e.g.* behind the back stairs.
7. The walking sticks become live things as they swing off on the ramble.
11. **pitch ;** 12. **tone.** The poet seems to believe that dogs follow the rise and fall of tone in the human voice but cannot distinguish words as we do. **through fog :** obscurely.
14. **walk-intensive :** bent on a walk.
21. **mind :** intellectual occupations.
32. Because of the well-known habit (perhaps acquired when dogs were wild).

Page 251. Coronach. "A wild expression of lamentation poured forth by the mourners over the body of a departed friend" (Scott). The word is Celtic.

15. **flushing :** sending out of new shoots.
17. **correi :** "the hollow side of the hill where game usually lies." (Lockhart's notes.) This word also is Celtic and rhymes pretty well with "foray."

Page 251. Pre-Existence.

23. **pre-pelasgian :** prehistoric. The Pelasgi were the earliest inhabitants of Greece.

Page 252. Goblin Market.

12. **dewberries :** in England a kind of blackberry, which has a bluish, dew-like bloom ; in America the low blackberry, which has a large sweet fruit.
22. **bullaces :** wild plums; in America the muscadine grape.
24. **Damsons :** small dark purple plum. **bilberries :** fruit of a hardy shrub found on heaths and mountains in Europe ; whortleberries. In America the name is sometimes given to the June-berry.
27. **barberries :** oblong red berries.
29. **citrons :** fruit like lemon, but larger.
75. **wombat :** an Australian animal somewhat like a small bear.
76. **ratel :** an animal of the badger family.
83. **beck :** mountain stream, brook.
120. **furze :** yellow-flowered evergreen shrub that grows in waste lands.
161. **blow :** blossom.
179. **pellucid :** transparent.
258. **succous :** succulent, juicy.

300. **cankerous care :** anxiety which caused her to waste away as the canker-worm destroys the bud.
451. **copse :** underwood. **dingle :** deep, shady dell.
559. **antidote :** medicine given to counteract poison.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Browning, Robert (1812–89), born in a London suburb, was fortunate in having a father who sympathised with his son's early inclination for poetry. By 1846, the date of his marriage to the poetess, Elizabeth Barrett, he had published two long poems, two dramatic poems, seven dramas and two volumes of " dramatic " lyrics and romances. After 1846 he wrote no more dramas, but all his subsequent work has the dramatic element which is so plainly marked in his earlier writings. His favourite method is to conceive a person speaking to an imaginary listener in a situation which might constitute a scene in an actual drama. Browning and his wife lived in Florence for fifteen years, and much of his best poetry is inspired by Italian life and art. *The Italian in England* bears witness to the poet's sympathy with the Italians in their struggle for freedom.

Byron.—George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824)—is personally the most interesting of the Romantic poets from his high rank, his easy success in letters, his dissipated life, his voluntary exile, and his early death in the Greek War of Independence. Into almost all his writings the poet himself intrudes, gloomy, injured and scornful. His fame rests mainly upon his satires, of which *Don Juan* and *The Vision of Judgment* are the masterpieces. Other works are the plays, the Oriental romances, and the poetical guide-book *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Among his few short narratives are the spirited *Mazeppa* and the restrained and moving *Prisoner of Chillon*.

Campbell, Thomas (1777–1844), Scots poet and critic, was three times elected Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow, the last time (1829) over no less a rival than Sir Walter Scott. He is chiefly known for his shorter lyrics, *Hohenlinden*, *Ye Mariners of England*, *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, and *The Battle of the Baltic*.

Carman, Bliss (1861–1929), " Canada's poet-laureate," is before all else a poet of nature. His *Low Tide on Grand Pré* (1893) was the first of a long series of volumes of poetry and prose. Two of his later volumes of verse are *Ballads and Lyrics*, 1923, and *Far Horizons*, 1925.

CHALMERS, PATRICK R. (1872–) is a London banker, who writes verse of a cheerful tone, sometimes contributed to *Punch*. The selection in this volume is from his *Green Days and Blue Days*.

COLERIDGE, SAMUEL TAYLOR (1772–1834), exercised his uncommon abilities as journalist, philosopher, preacher and critic. In addition he has left a small body of poetry of the noblest quality, written during the two or three years of his first acquaintance with Wordsworth. All readers of *Kubla Khan*, *Christabel* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* feel the word-magic and the music of verse with which the poet carries them, believing for the moment, through events and scenes far outside ordinary human experience.

CORNFORD, FRANCES—Mrs. F. M. Cornford (1872–)—is a granddaughter of Charles Darwin and the wife of a classical lecturer at Trinity College, Cambridge. She has published several volumes of verse, the last to appear being *Autumn Midnight*, 1923. She is also the author of a play, *Death and the Princess : a Morality*, 1913.

COWPER, WILLIAM (1731–1800). The important events in the life of Cowper were his frequent attacks of insanity, his meeting with the Reverend William Unwin and his wife, and his conversion to Methodism. To amuse himself after a fit of madness Cowper began to write poetry, and with the Unwins at Huntingdon and Olney he found the gentle sympathy and encouragement he needed to develop his poetic vein. The *Olney Hymns* reflect Cowper's new religious experience. The *Task* and *John Gilpin*, published in 1785, gave him a national reputation. Towards the end of his life the cloud of despondency again descended and he was haunted by the conviction that he was a lost soul. *The Castaway* reflects the prevailing mood of his last unhappy years.

DAVIES, WILLIAM HENRY (1870–), a native of Wales, led for over thirty years a roving life in America and in England, as is related in his prose work *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*. He has published various volumes of poems, mainly devoted to nature, the more recent of which are *Secrets*, 1924, *The Song of Love*, 1925,—both volumes of poetry,—and the autobiographical *Later Days*, 1925.

DE LA MARE, WALTER (1873–), is both novelist and poet. His verse is musical and imaginative, which partly accounts for his eminence in the difficult field of children's poetry. Two of his later works are *The Connoisseur* (short stories), 1926, and *Stuff and Nonsense* (poems), 1927.

DOBSON, HENRY AUSTIN (1840–1921), a charming essayist, is chiefly known in poetry as a writer of lighter verse, especially

intricate lyrical forms of French origin such as the villanelle and ballade.

GIBSON, WILFRID WILSON (1878–), is an English poet and writer of verse plays. He is rather fond of tragic situations affecting simple folk in rude surroundings. His most recent volume of poems, *I heard a Sailor*, appeared in 1925, and a collected edition was published in 1926.

GILBERT, SIR WILLIAM SCHWENCK (1836–1911), was an English humorist whose fame rests upon his *Bab Ballads* and the comic operas he composed in partnership with Sir Arthur Sullivan—*H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Mikado*, etc.

HERRICK, ROBERT (1591–1674), one of the chief of the English pastoral lyrists, published his *Hesperides*, the work by which he is best known, in 1648.

HUNT, JAMES HENRY LEIGH (1784–1859), friend of Byron, Shelley and Keats, is best known in letters as a journalist and writer of genial essays. His poetry shows much metrical skill and facility in the development of narrative.

JOHNSON, EMILY PAULINE (Tekahionwake, 1862–1913), was born on the estate of her father, Head Chief of the Six Nations, in the Indian Reserve near Brantford, Ontario. For a number of years she was well known as a poet and entertainer in the British Isles and the United States as well as in Canada. Her chief publications are *The White Wampum* (1894), *Canadian Born* (1903), *Flint and Feathers* (1912), all books of verse; and *Legends of Vancouver* (1911). Her later years were spent in Vancouver, and her ashes were buried near Siwash Rock, at the western extremity of Stanley Park.

KEATS, JOHN (1795–1821), has a place in the first rank of English lyrical poets notwithstanding the fact that he died at the early age of twenty-five. His longer works are *Endymion* and *Hyperion*.

KINGSLEY, CHARLES (1819–1875), canon of Westminster, is best known as the author of several popular novels, of which the most famous are *Hypatia* (1853) and *Westward Ho!* (1855). His poetic fame rests upon *The Three Fishers* and the present poem, *The Sands of Dee*, which appeared in the novel, *Alton Locke* (1849).

KIPLING, RUDYARD (1865–), born in Bombay and writing first in India on Indian themes, is now long established in the county of Sussex in England. He is one of the world's great short-story writers. In his poetry, whether appearing under its own covers as with *Barrack-Room Ballads* and *The Seven Seas*, or scattered among his prose narratives, he is "a man speaking to men" and a master of versification. Few modern writers so completely understand the form and

spirit of the old ballad. His most recent publications are *Debits and Credits* (short stories and poems), 1926, and *A Book of Words* (speeches and essays), 1928.

LAMPMAN, ARCHIBALD (1861–99), a Canadian, published his first volume of poetry, *Among the Millet*, at the age of seventeen; his second, *Lyrics of Earth*, when he was twenty-two; the third volume, *Alcyone*, was in the press when the poet died.

LONGFELLOW, HENRY WADSWORTH (1807–1882), a professor of modern languages at Harvard, is chief among the New England poets of the mid-nineteenth century. Of his longer narratives *Hiawatha* and *Evangeline* are the best known. Many of his ballads and other shorter narrative pieces are included in *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, in which he reproduces with great spirit and metrical skill stories from various lands.

LOWELL, JAMES RUSSELL (1819–91), besides being a famous American poet and critic, was notable as a man of affairs. He succeeded Longfellow to the chair of Modern Languages and Literature at Harvard, and was for five years (1880–85) American Ambassador in London. His principal critical works are *Among My Books* and *My Study Window*. *The Biglow Papers*, dialect verses in the satiric vein, and *The Vision of Sir Launfal* (1848) are amongst his best-known poems.

MCARTHUR, PETER (1866–1924), born of Scottish parents at Ekfrid, Ontario, contributed to several Canadian, American and English newspapers and magazines, and was for a time editor of the American *Truth*. After living for a number of years in the United States and England he returned in 1908 to the farm on which he was born, and remained there until his death. *In Pastures Green* (1915), a collection of some of his best articles on farm life, is perhaps his most popular book. It is from this volume that *The Stone* is taken.

MACAULAY—Thomas Babington, Lord Macaulay (1800–59) —ranks high as essayist and historian. His poems, of which the *Lays of Ancient Rome* are the best known, are distinguished by martial spirit and rhetorical expression.

MACKAY, CHARLES (1814–89), was a Scotsman whose songs were immensely popular in his own day. The best known of these are perhaps *Cheer, Boys, Cheer!—The Departing Emigrants*, and *The Good Time Coming*. As *The Times* correspondent during the Civil War in the United States he discovered and revealed the Fenian conspiracy in America.

MONRO, HAROLD (1879–), has done notable service in the cause of poetry in this generation as publisher, book-

seller, critic and author. Besides publishing at least six volumes of poetry, he has written a survey of recent verse—*Some Contemporary Poets* (1920). His last book of verse, *The Earth for Sale*, appeared in 1928.

Morris, William (1834–96), was a man of varied interests who achieved renown in at least three lines of activity. When twenty-seven years old he began a career of designing and manufacturing domestic decorations and furniture; and working on the principle that what is useful may also be beautiful, he helped to revolutionise public taste as regards the interior of English houses. His idealism and his experiences with working men led him to socialism, and he was one of the originators of the Socialist League. As a man of letters Morris was pre-eminently a story-teller, who recounted with individuality and charm Arthurian romance, Old French, Norse and Greek legend. In all his varied activities he was dominated by the ideal of beauty, and that, too, in an age whose dominant spirit was commercialism.

Newbolt, Sir Henry (1862–), is an English novelist and poet. His chief interest is evident in the titles *Admirals All*, *Songs of the Sea*, *Songs of the Fleet*, among his poetical collections. His narrative poems, while not as numerous as his lyrics, show almost equal skill. More recent publications are a book of essays, *Studies in Green and Grey*, 1926, and *The Linnet's Nest* (poetry), 1927.

Noyes, Alfred (1880–), is one of the modern English poets who have been powerfully influenced by the romance of the sea. In 1913 he delivered the Lowell Lectures on "The Sea in Poetry." He was Professor of Modern English Literature at Princeton University from 1914 to 1923. His first book, *The Loom of Years*, appeared in 1902, and since then he has published many volumes, amongst them *The Forty Singing Seamen* (1907), *Drake* (1908), *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* (1913), and *A Salute to the Fleet* (1915). Volumes I and II of his *Collected Poems* appeared in 1910, Volume III in 1920, and Volume IV in 1927.

Pickthall, Marjorie L. C. (1883–1922), the daughter of English parents who came to Canada in 1890, first attracted notice by her contributions to the Toronto *Mail and Empire* while she was still in her 'teens. In 1913 a volume of her collected verse was issued under the title *A Drift of Pinions*, and was received with a chorus of applause from reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic. She died at Vancouver in 1922.

Poe, Edgar Allan (1809–49), was an American journalist of unconventional habits and of pronounced genius. He is generally regarded as the father of the modern short story.

In poetry his favourite themes are love and death, which he presents in unreal surroundings and with great metrical skill.

PRAED, WINTHROP MACKWORTH (1802–39), distinguished himself at Eton by his brilliant work in a school journal. He entered parliament at the age of twenty-eight, but although he continued as a member until his death he never achieved fame. His reputation rests upon his verse, which exhibits cleverness and wit, frequently pathos, and sometimes grim humour such as pervades the present selection.

ROSSETTI, CHRISTINA (1830–94), sister of the poet and painter, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, began writing poetry as a child of twelve, and a volume of her verse was privately printed when she was seventeen. What is generally considered to be her best work, *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, was published in 1862. The touch of sadness that pervades most of her work is said to be due to an unhappy love affair in her youth.

ROSSETTI, DANTE GABRIEL (1828–82), son of an exiled Italian patriot, was both artist and poet. As a painter he was one of the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, whose aim was sincerity and faithful adherence to nature. His poetry is characterised by mysticism and romantic interest in the Middle Ages.

SCOTT, DUNCAN CAMPBELL (1862–), entered the Canadian Civil Service in 1880, and in 1913 became Deputy Superintendent-General of the Department of Indian Affairs. Besides performing his duties with efficiency, Dr. Scott has been able to find leisure to publish several volumes of prose and poetry. His more recent publications, which contain some of his best work, are *Lundy's Lane and Other Poems* (1916), and *Beauty and Life* (1921). *The Witching of Elspie : a Book of Stories* was printed in 1923, and his *Complete Poems in* 1926.

SCOTT, FREDERICK GEORGE (1861–), Archdeacon of Quebec, is the author of several volumes of poetry. His book, *Collected Poems*, was published in 1910. As a chaplain in the Canadian Expeditionary Force he performed notable service, for which he was awarded the D.S.O. His experiences in the war have found expression in *The Great War as I Saw It* (1922). In 1927 he won one of the David Awards (literature section) with a volume of poems, *In Sun and Shade*.

SCOTT, SIR WALTER (1771–1832), was educated for the Scottish bar, but soon turned from the law to letters, where he won distinction as poet, novelist and critic. His songs and other short lyrics, often introduced into the novels, are surpassed by those of but one Scottish poet. His narrative

poems either follow the form of the old popular ballad, as in *Rosabelle*, or are carried to the length and complexity of the metrical romance, as in *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake*. He is distinguished by his straightforward style and his bold presentation of action and of romantic scenery.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1792–1822), was one of the most remarkable of the lyric poets of the Romantic Revival. *The Cenci*, a play; *Prometheus Unbound*, a dramatic poem; and *Adonais*, an elegy occasioned by the death of Keats, are amongst his best-known works.

Southey, Robert (1774–1843), is reckoned the least of the three "Lake Poets." He is distinguished as a writer of prose, especially of biography. As a poet he shows more scholarship and metrical skill than imagination and inspiration. He spent much time on the construction of great epic poems, of which *Roderick* is the least unsuccessful. His poetic fame rests chiefly on his ballads, in which he handles with great effectiveness themes that are for the most part grim, grotesque or frankly humorous.

Stevenson, Robert Louis (1850–94), came of a line of famous Scots engineers. Ill-health unfitted Robert Louis to follow the family profession, and he was allowed to devote himself to literature. An invalid for a great part of his life, he visited many parts of Europe, America and Oceania in search of health. He finally settled at Apia on one of the Samoan islands, and there he died and was buried in 1894. Notwithstanding the depressing circumstances in which most of his work was done, his writings breathe the spirit of youth. His best known works are *A Child's Garden of Verses*, *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, the shorter *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and several volumes of essays.

Tennyson—Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–92), is the most popular poet of the Victorian age. In many respects he was the typical man of letters of the middle and later nineteenth century. Intensely interested in all the thought movements of his time, he had the gift of being able to express himself, and to a large extent his age, in memorable poetry. He became poet-laureate in 1850. The moral and religious colouring of his best known works, *In Memoriam* (1850) and *Idylls of the King* (1859–72), made an especial appeal to the latter half of the nineteenth century. Readers of the twentieth century, however, seem to find more delight in the exquisite music of his shorter pieces.

Wordsworth, William (1770–1850), is the recognised leader of the Romantic movement in English poetry. His life was spent almost entirely in the Lake Country of north-

east England, whence the term "Lake Poets," applied to him and his friends, Coleridge and Southey. His chief interest is in humbler humanity and in Nature. He points constantly to the woods and hills as a medicine for the mind and heart and as a guide to our mutual understanding. His lyrical poems, by which he is, perhaps, best known, include *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, *Tintern Abbey* and a host of fine shorter pieces. In longer narrative his *Excursion* is unsuccessful, but *The Prelude*, the autobiographical account of a poet's development, is a very great achievement. He has written many short narratives, mainly in the ballad form, and is credited with the invention of the poetical narrative of middle length, of which *Michael* is a fine example.

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MacDonald, Wilbert Lorne,
Poems, chiefly narrative. Rev
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